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D. C. SCOTT AND THE DESIRE FOR A SENSE OF ORDER

by

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Date Feb. 18, 1983

DEDICATION

To Donna, Erica and Jared
for their patience
and understanding

With special thanks to
Professor Dick Harrison
and Professor David Jackel
for their advice
and other assistance

ABSTRACT

The object of this study is to identify and evaluate the central philosophical, religious and social assumptions which order the writing of D. C. Scott. I intend to prove that the same intellectual outlook informed both his work as a bureaucrat and his writing, and that his ideas reflected the major concerns of his English Canadian culture. Because my study is a significant departure in method from most Scott criticism, an important part of the discussion involves a close study of the growth and character of this critical tradition.

There are seven chapters in this study, and each chapter is designed to clarify the fact that Scott valued a rational, historical and moral interpretation of life. The Introduction describes the theory which has shaped most Scott criticism to date, and identifies the weakness which renders this criticism misleading. Next, Chapter I details the development of critical opinion on Scott and shows how this opinion has been adopted by Northrop Frye and others influenced by him, resulting in a willful misreading of the writer's work. Chapter II argues the advantages of establishing an historical context for Scott's work. This chapter examines Scott's intellectual milieu and discusses the convictions which determined his choice and execution of a career with government. Chapter III shows that the idealism which was present in his role as civil servant was also the determining feature of much of Scott's writing. The religious and philosophical vision that he developed is discussed in relation to a number of important works, including "The

Height of Land." Chapter IV reveals how Scott used an evolutionary theory of history and change to judge individual and collective social action and how he used a cluster of symbols to reflect his personal moral outlook. Chapter V examines Scott's exploration of the problems posed by conflicting desires, and of the necessity of making choices which reflect an acceptance of the external world. This exploration culminated for Scott personally in the overall structure and individual works of his last collection, The Green Cloister. The concluding chapter examines the implications that arise from an historical and intellectual emphasis in my study of Scott, and compares my findings with those of the critics who have come to represent the consensus in Scott criticism.

Current critical opinion often describes Scott as being a "watershed" figure in the development of a Canadian literature, one who achieved a claim to greatness because he rejected the assumptions of a stifling tradition. In their eagerness to read Scott as an epitome of a theorized national consciousness, the critics who hold this opinion have chosen to ignore a large body of evidence which contradicts their interpretation of his work. My study examines the nature and implications of this evidence.

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to correct certain misconceptions regarding the significance of the work of Canadian writer and civil servant, Duncan Campbell Scott, misconceptions that have become firmly entrenched in Canadian literary criticism. A tradition of criticism, one which relies on an ahistorical and mythic interpretation, has chosen Scott as an exemplary figure for a national literature, and in so doing, has consistently and sometimes willfully misinterpreted the thematic structures which inform his writing. Most recently, the followers of this tradition have tried to show that Scott was the first writer in Canada to break out of old, European modes of rational thinking, a kind of thinking he found repressive of individual freedom and creativity. They say that he sought to incorporate ambiguity and irrationality as positive qualities in his work, and refused to make choices between antithetical concepts of value. These critics, I contend, ignore the fact that Scott's philosophic outlook was both historical and rational, and was governed by a conviction that life involved making moral choices.

The consensus of critical opinion I describe has succeeded in accurately describing a basic characteristic of much of Scott's work: his use of contrarities or polar opposites as vehicles for thematic content. This ordering device is identified in critical studies as a tension between Indian and white cultures, between European tradition and North American innovation, between qualities of intensity and restraint. My own examination begins in agreement with this observation of opposition as a key concept in Scott's work, but departs from the general critical opinion with regard to the ways in which he employed the idea of contrarity. The basis of my objection is best illustrated by looking at the critical view which informs the publication in 1980 of the papers delivered at the Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium in Ottawa.

K. P. Stitch, editor of the Symposium essays, introduces the collected papers with observations which define both Scott's importance and the way in which he should be studied. Saying that Scott's work represents a national "moment of becoming" and a "watershed" of achievement, Stitch describes the contributions by John P. Matthews and Gordon Johnston, who

> explore the complex antinomies in Scott's poetry. Both see the mind of a scientist behind his poetic energy attempting to control opposing forces. While Johnston focuses on the dangers of simplification and confusion inherent in the reconciliation of contraries, Matthews reinforces Scott's successful syntheses of opposites.[1]

What Stitch reveals is that Matthews and Johnston share two assumptions: first, that there are contraries in the work and second, that the evaluation of these contraries must be defined in terms of a process, either a reconciliation or a synthesis, where the opposing elements lose their claim to mutual exclusivity. The contraries of rationality and irrationality, to use an example frequently found in Scott, are in this view blended or balanced. The ways in which critics such as Matthews and Johnston have come to define Scott's use of contraries, and what this definition actually reveals about the critics' own ideas about reason and moral choice, are subjects that deserve detailed discussion.

Scott, I think, did not see the reconciliation or synthesis of opposites as a desired end, but as a destructive irresolution, a false state created by the Self to deny the full realization of the realities of the Other, the external world. In the most representative aspects of his oppositions, Scott shows the Self as an individual consciousness being drawn outward but fearing the loss of identity it thinks the external world demands: it is Pierre alternately returning to and fleeing from his family and community, Charcoal suffering between polar desires to be a "good" Indian and a "bad" Indian, and Scott's persona in The Green Cloister trying to transform death imaginatively into an aesthetically pleasing experience.

Balancing or blending oppositions, an act critics have said results in a happy or complete vision, is seen by Scott as an invention of the Self which fears the reality of the Other and succeeds only in postponing what must be an inevitable condition or experience. Thus, in his Indian poems and stories, Scott depicts individual Indians suffering, not because they are the victims of cultural assimilation, but because they have not accepted the truth of process and change. Historical change is the figure of the Other in this instance and to imply, as Johnston does in his essay, that Scott harbored a secret criticism of Indian policy is to deny how dangerous it is to stand in the middle ground of narratives such as "At Gull Lake: August 1810." Scott's thinking with regard to the Indian is best understood when seen against the background of his Victorian heritage and those ideals which assumed the necessity of making moral choices in life.

An examination of Scott's work as a civil servant reveals how much he was influenced by the current and prevailing ideas concerning the nature of process or change. As a bureaucrat, he was the willing instrument of an industrial society determined to transform or destroy old and different cultures and ideologies which might stand in the way of change. For Scott and the overwhelming majority of Canadians whom he served, this meant the assimilation not only of the Indian, but of virtually all other economies and social systems as well. He did not, for example, write a lament for the passing of rural communities or a condemnation of urban society, as did his friend Archibald Lampman.

However, the inevitability of change held an irony for Scott's own culture, an irony which he could not overlook. A society based on the presupposition of change as a constant, he discovered, may have to accept the possibility that its own cherished ideals will be subject to the same constant. Gerald Graff, in his study of western culture, credits Marx with being one of the first to identify this characteristic of a capitalist society:

> Marx's best known contribution to the theory of ideology was of course his view that class societies develop beliefs that reflect the material interests of the dominant class. Less widely noted is Marx's more subtle perception that the capitalist form of society is so fundamentally volatile and irreverent that it weakens the authority of all ideologies.[2]

The implication, as Graff demonstrates, is that forces are set in motion which do not respect their own origin, and Scott became painfully aware of this condition when he considered the state of Christianity in his time. He thought that Christianity was in a transitional stage and believed something of the traditional belief could be salvaged to live on in new form. However, as the historian J. H. Plumb observes, old beliefs suffer a more total transformation at the hands of a progressive industrial society:

> Industrial society, unlike the commercial, craft and agrarian societies which it replaces, does not need the past. Its intellectual and emotional orientation is towards change rather

> than conservation, towards exploitation and consumption. The new methods, new processes, new forms of living of scientific and industrial society have no sanction in the past and no roots in it. The past becomes, therefore, a matter of curiosity, of nostalgia, a sentimentality. Of course, vestiges of its strength remain, particularly in religion and politics, which are still in conflict and in crisis within the new advanced industrial societies.[3]

Politics and religion, the two areas Plumb identifies as struggling to maintain viability, commanded a great deal of Scott's attention, the first because it imposed pragmatic restrictions upon his Department work and the second because it offered a tradition of ideals which might temper the pragmatism of his age. But the Christian and humanist ideals were themselves under terrific pressure from the very forces they were to help shape, and primary among these was historical change. Scott's perception of this problem informs his writing on religious beliefs and philosophical outlooks and, ironically, he found himself in a situation very similar to the one the Indian experienced: not eager to relinquish fully the past, and not able to articulate clearly for himself the future he believed was inevitable, he suffered in a middle intellectual ground of conflicting desires. In the poem "The Height of Land," for example, he tries to define a faith based upon evolving knowledge about an evolving external world, but the work is a mixed success because the desire to maintain his subjective and intuitive Wordsworthian-based faith is too strong to be rejected.

The failure to accept the realities of the external world, Scott believed, brought suffering or even violent destruction and one of the key symbols of this violence is the storm. For those characters in the stories and poems who try to ignore the choices demanded of them by the external world, the result is a psychological or social storm and, sometimes, a mirrored disturbance in the physical world. The irrationality of this denial is represented by the headless Indian in "Powassan's Drum" and by Clute, who suffers a head wound in "Clute Boulay"--both are characters who are destroyed by the violence they have stirred. For Scott, the denial of the realities that exist outside the Self always has moral implications. This observation informs even the less overtly violent tales such as "Labrie's Wife," which is about a trader who mistakenly believes that he can avoid moral responsibility by claiming social innocence.

A number of important works demonstrate clearly that Scott was aware of the potential of the polarity between Self and Other as an ordering device for his poetry and fiction. The circle shape, as a representation of the movement of desire between opposing poles of attraction, is seen in stories such as "Charcoal" and "Paul Farlotte," and in poems such as "The Piper of Arll." That Scott was well aware of the workings of this polarity within himself is revealed by the aesthetic and psychological tensions explored in the individual works and in the general organization of The Green Cloister.

The process by which Scott saw himself coming to accept the realities of an objective, other-directed world is summarized in The Green Cloister. It is, I think, the kind of process made necessary by what Gerald Graff has called the external world's "resisting reality." In Literature Against Itself, Graff criticizes recent literature which sees the world exclusively as a creation of the imagination. What must be recognized, he insists, is that the world offers a separate integrity of being:

> It is this "resisting reality" that the current way of talking about fictions fails to respect. Certain common experiences of this resisting reality possess so high a degree of unrefusability that they have the force of givens in our everyday experience. It was doubtless these experiences to which Henry James referred when he described "the real" as "the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later, in one way or another." The reality of the physical world, the inevitability of death, the social nature of man, the irrevocability of historical events and changes--these are facts we cannot possibly not know, though we can argue infinitely about their significance and how we ought to understand them.[4]

In Scott's writing, as in his government work, there is the belief that one must accept such resisting realities as historical change and death, but it was easier for him to teach that acceptance than it was for him to adopt it personally. Many of his individual works show a wavering resolve in this regard, but The Green Cloister sets out to demonstrate the acceptance he has said throughout his life is necessary. The collection is a sad acceptance of the limitations placed upon personal desire by the external world, and Scott clearly intends that the reader see that the imaginative vision of art is also limited in this way.

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CHAPTER I

THE ENSHRINEMENT OF A CRITICAL IDEA

Compared to other significant Canadian literary figures, Duncan Campbell Scott has had relatively little written about his work; that criticism in a brief time has, however, taken on distinctive characteristics. Two vague conclusions are apparent in the evolution of critical opinion with regard to the work of Scott. First, critics say that Scott has a significant place in Canadian literature, but they are not sure what or how important it is. Roy Daniells, in the Literary History of Canada, places Scott last in his analysis of Confederation poets and says his value is primarily as a nature poet who revealed "Canada's wildness and beauty."[1] For Daniells, Scott is a very good nature poet, but somehow not as good a poet generally as Lampman or Roberts. Tom Marshall is more favorable in his placement of Scott as "the best and most important of [the Confederation poets], since he goes further technically, emotionally, and intellectually towards an idiom that can embody the Canadian situation."[2] But Marshall's arguments are stronger in their assertion than in their proof because he selects a limited aspect of Scott's work, the violent themes of the Indian poems, to define the poet's Canadian content. Though they differ significantly in their opinions of Scott, Daniells and Marshall share a desire to see the writer as one who helps define Canadian character and, therefore, they have directed attention away from the literary works themselves.

Whenever they have turned briefly from a consideration of the general nature of Canadian literature to actual analysis of Scott's writings, critics have developed a second vague conclusion. Most will concede there is some unity of thought in Scott's work. Daniells says simply that "only nature, and preferably nature in her most primitive and untamed aspect, is capable of releasing Scott's powers as a poet."[3] Daniells seems to be talking about violence and conflict in Scott's work, but does not bother to illustrate his argument. Marshall uses the intriguing phrase "the dialectical character of Scott's vision,"[4] but does not define dialectical beyond using it as a word to describe a couple of poems. Daniells, Marshall and most other critics have stated in varying ways that conflicting forces or values seem important to Scott, a consensus often articulated as a duality of "intensity and restraint." But the concept of intensity and restraint has confused rather than clarified understanding, as it has never been explained, even by those who see it as a key to understanding Scott. The usual process has been to fall confusedly away from the details of Scott's work, in favor of using him as a touchstone for thematic theories.

Because so much Canadian criticism, past and present, has been concerned with defining Canadian national character, it is not surprising that critics have usually spoken of Scott as a representative figure of one kind or another. It is this fact, and not the intrinsic achievements of his work, that has determined his worth over the past ninety years. Early in his career, critics did not see in him the national ideals they saw in his contemporaries and so we have the often-mentioned "neglect" of Scott during most of his own lifetime. Later, and especially after his death, literary taste sought a revised standard of Canadianism, with the result that the value of certain poets, like Carman, declined while that of others, like Scott, ascended. A rough indication of this transformation can be seen in the Canadian literary anthologies published during the last one hundred years.

The earliest anthologies took as givens a number of opinions of taste which helped determine Scott's later stature as a writer. First, editors assumed that significant literature was synonymous with poetry, with the result that prose was ignored in anthologies until 1923. When Marquis said in 1913 that the "chief glory of Canadian literature was its poetry,"[5] he was echoing a conviction evidently held by editors before him, but never put to the test by any critic. So, even though Scott began publishing prose at approximately the same time as verse, his reputation was first established and maintained as a poet, partly I think, because serious literary taste preferred poets to prose writers. When E. K. Broadus and Eleanor Broadus published the first anthology of combined Canadian prose and poetry in 1923, Scott was absent though by this time he had many stories in print. Watson and Pierce in the same year passed him over and it was not until 1928 when Raymond Knister included "Labrie's Wife" in his Canadian Short Stories that Scott gained recognition. Since Knister's decision, other editors have shown an interest in Scott, but the pattern has had its quirks, with Daymond and Monkman in 1978 seemingly agreeing with older standards by including Scott's poetry but none of his prose.

There is no evidence that Scott's prose was judged by his contemporary editors to be clearly inferior to his poetry; even later editors like Daymond and Monkman provide no explanation for their decision, which suggests that personal taste may have been the sole criterion employed. In fact, Knister describes the collection In the Village of Viger as "a perfect flowering of art,"[6] an assessment which suggests, at the very least, a radical difference between the tastes of certain editors. A reasonable conclusion is that Scott was not rejected because the quality of his work in prose was poor, but because he was being identified as a poet.

If anthology editors preferred poetry to fiction, then it is equally true that they preferred certain kinds of poetry as well, and this preference also helped determine Scott's place in the hierarchy of Canadian literature. Dewart set the tone in 1864 when he said that "a national literature is an essential element in the formation of a national character. It is not merely the record of a country's mental progress: it is the expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity, and the guide of national energy."[7] Dewart obviously did not stop at seeing a literature's function as being reflection or commentary; literature as a bond or guide is art as an active shaping agent. Dewart was to be prophetic, since he established a critical precedent for choosing literary works that would further a nation's unity, intellectual life and energy, and not merely grow out of those things. Dewart, and editors after him, had their eyes on a literary theory of nationhood which played as great a part in their choices of works as did purely literary standards of excellence. Therefore, it is not surprising that Dewart chooses as his two major specific subject headings the "Sacred and Reflective" and the "Descriptive and National." Subject matter of a special kind is the element of unity looked for in his representative selection of poems.

W. D. Lighthall, in Songs of the Great Dominion (1889), continues to choose poetry with an emphasis on general content though he subdivides more often than Dewart, using headings like "The Imperial Spirit," "The New Nationality," "The Indian," "The Voyageur and Habitant," "Places" and "Seasons." Lighthall is an unrestrained booster of Canada, saying that the poets in his book have the "consciousness of young might, public wealth, and heroism."[8] He writes with a great deal of attention to a potential British audience and is anxious to prove the worth of Canada, listing the attributes of her landscape and peoples in some detail. Lighthall, who seeks to emphasize the imperial connection between Canada and Britain, claims that Charles G. D. Roberts is to Canadians what Tennyson is to the British, that there is a similarity in the two nations in the wish to continue a valued tradition. His clear aim is to delineate national character using specific guides, and the relatively new poet Duncan Campbell Scott is called upon to define a place in "Ottawa" and a people, French Canadian, in "At the Cedars"--at least that is how Lighthall groups these two poems.

The anthologies that follow Lighthall's reveal two general trends which have ended with the most recent evaluations of Scott. First, the estimation of Scott was linked to that of other poets (called by many critics the Confederation group) and rose in comparison to these figures through the publication of successive anthologies. Also, editors established two distinctive Scott canons, the second more or less displacing the first around the early 1930's.

Critical standards are usually not clearly stated in the earlier Canadian anthologies, and the modern reader must infer the editor's standards or intentions through an observation of the material compiled. Frequently, an historical perspective from one anthology to the next is only possible after resorting to the most basic of objective procedures, namely, by counting the number of pages devoted to individual poets. J. E. Wetherell, in Later Canadian Poems (1893), uses no other criteria for his selection than to say his are "the best known of our younger Canadian poets":[9] Cameron, Campbell, Carman, Lampman, Roberts, D. C. Scott, and F. G. Scott. Wetherell and T. H. Rand (1904) devote an equal or lesser amount of attention to Scott as to the others, as does Wilfred Campbell in 1913, though Campbell elevates Carman above the rest. This, of course, is a reflection of the popularity Carman was enjoying both in Canada and in the United States. Vagabondia and songs of the open road certainly appealed to Americans as a continuance of Whitmanesque sentiments, and many Canadians found Carman's cultivation of the persona attractive too. Although a number of Scott's poems dealt with nature and reflection, his style and insights were definitely not those of Carman. Scott once remarked that he and Carman were not tilling the same literary fields and, while this was true, it did not immediately aid the growth of Scott's fame.[10]

In most anthologies of the 1920's and 30's, Scott is included with the Carman-Lampman-Roberts-Campbell group as a poet whose poems "suited our purpose, which demanded a Canadian outlook, brevity, wholesomeness and beauty."[11] But the 1923 Broadus collection, A Book of Canadian Prose and Verse, is interesting because it omits Scott entirely: of the English-speaking poets Lampman is the most thoroughly represented, though the editors express regret over not having more material from Carman, Roberts, and Pickthall. The editors may not have included Scott because his works would not fit into their "representative selection of Canadian poems which reflect the love of country or of empire; which relate to Canadian history; or which depict or are inspired by the Canadian landscape."[12] Though their exclusion of Scott may seem extreme when compared to most other anthologies, the editors were following the precedent set by Dewart and Lighthall, which was to choose poetry which reflected a national ideal. The Broadus rejection of Scott is not as much an aberration as it first appears, as my study of the critical material of the time will show. Scott simply did not suit the taste of one segment of critical opinion as well as other poets evidently did.

Collections by Ralph Gustafson, Carl Klinck, and A. J. M. Smith mark the beginning of a gradual growth in popularity of Scott's work. In his 1943 collection, Smith downgrades the whole "school of Carman and Roberts" (lumping Scott with them), in favor of more modern writers, but later in his 1960 anthology he singles Scott out for special attention, saying, "In his best work Scott is as sensitive and intense as Carman, and far more accurate; as accurate as Lampman or Roberts, and more truly passionate than either."[13] Scott's reputation is established at the expense of his contemporary figures, especially Carman and Campbell. Smith says that Campbell's verse is "interesting and significant in only one volume,"[14] an assessment with which the more recent anthologies have tended to agree. In fact, Weaver and Toye (1973) drop Campbell altogether, and like Edwards (1973) after them, begin to de-emphasize Roberts as well. Daymond and Monkman (1978) add nothing new to the hierarchy of value, and merely widen the gap between the poets.

If Scott's standing generally changed during the years of these publications, so did the selection of poems anthologized. Judging from the lists of poems included, there have been two accepted Scott canons. The first, established by Lighthall and Wetherell, consists mainly of poems like "The Fifteenth of April," "Above St. Irénée," "Off Riviere du Loup," "The End of the Day" and "Ottawa." These are reflective pieces or descriptive poems of place, and answer the stated need of the editors to define the country, to acquaint readers (mainly British) with Canada in forms and language that are familiar and supposedly appropriate.

The second anthological canon consists mainly of what have often been called Scott's Indian poems. Bliss Carman and Lorne Pierce initiated this important change in their collection of 1922 (revised in 1935) by including the poems "On the Way to the Mission," "The Forsaken" and "The Half-Breed Girl." Once again, the editors do not indicate clearly what their critical standards are, but it should be noted that the increasing attention paid to the Indian poems coincides with a renewed interest in narrative poetry in Canada, which finds most evident expression in the work of E. J. Pratt. As well, poetry in the 1930's takes on a decidedly social emphasis, which may mean that the Indian as a social issue became apparent to the established literary circles who saw in Scott an ideal combination of literary and sociological viewpoints. The classification of Scott as a poet of the Indians has become firmly entrenched, with succeeding editors adding "At Gull Lake: August 1810," "The Onondaga Madonna" and "Powassan's Drum" to the poems picked by Carman and Pierce. However, most editors have not bothered to explain why the Indian poems should be represented more frequently than other kinds, and we must conclude that even with the most recent anthologies Scott is still being summoned to help define the national image.

Anthologies give at best a rough insight into the growth of critical opinion; works of criticism give a fuller, but not inconsistent, view. Some of the earliest assessments of Canadian literature are notable, ironically, because they neglect Scott. In one of the first major studies of Canadian literature, Archibald MacMechan virtually ignores Scott, making a single half-line reference to him as a biographer of Simcoe. The editor of the modern re-issue of MacMechan's Headwaters of Canadian Literature (1924) is apologetic about Scott's omission, saying it is indicative of the "blindness" of the critics of that time.[15] L. J. Burpee (1909) and T. G. Marquis (1913) both give very brief mention to Scott in their studies, and it is safe to say that early critics generally did not recognize any of Scott's writings as important achievements though some small recognition was given to his poetry.

Since none of the critics who omit Scott say they do because he is deficient as a writer, one can only guess at their possible reasons. One possibility is that Scott's relationship to Archibald Lampman, a personal friend and poet whose fame Scott helped further, served to eclipse his own standing as a poet.

It was an American critic who established the grounds for Lampman criticism and, by association, for the relative placing of Scott in the Canadian literary picture. William Dean Howells gave Lampman praise in the pages of Harper's and later wrote that Lampman's "pure spirit was electrical in every line; he made no picture of the nature he loved in which he did not supply the spectator with the human interest of his own genial presence, and light up the scene with the lamp of his keen and beautiful intelligence."[16] These words, which Burpee used to introduce his remarks on the poet and which were later repeated by Marquis, emphasize certain qualities in a poet: purity of spirit and love of nature, and co-identification of personality with literary work.

Old methods die hard in Canadian criticism, and the criteria applied to selecting and evaluating poetry by Burpee in 1909 became entrenched. His Little Book of Canadian Essays aims to bring attention to "forgotten or half-forgotten worthies" and sees Lampman, but not Scott, as one of these. Burpee seeks to canonize Lampman, describing him as an ideal man and poet who had "absolute sincerity."[17] He mentions Scott, but only as friend and biographer of Lampman, linking the two men in a way which becomes typical of later criticism. T. G. Marquis repeats Burpee's quotation of Howells, and goes on to say that Lampman was "a spirit of rarest excellence."[18] Marquis praises the poet for never losing sight of his art while having to put up with the drudgery of civil service work. Scott, who of course not only put up with the same work but excelled in it, is briefly mentioned, again as the editor of Lampman's material. More than ten years later, criticism in the voice of Archibald MacMechan continues to pass over Scott while laying lavish praise upon Lampman.

The critical imagination, it would appear, was captured by the work and personality of Lampman. MacMechan sees him as a pioneer of sorts, a "true lover of Nature"[19] who writes verse that is "essentially Canadian."[20] Never before, MacMechan says, had "an author so purely Canadian . . . written verse so deeply imbued with the very spirit of Canada."[21] These observations, appearing in a chapter headed "The National Impulse," show that the critic is looking for qualities that typify something that can articulate a nationalistic vision. Since Carman, Roberts, Duncan and Parker are grouped with Lampman here, it is evident that Scott is judged according to a nationalist standard and, compared to the others, found wanting. Too, the image of Lampman as a sensitive being hemmed in by bureaucratic life seems cherished by critics and Scott provides a foil to this romantic ideal. An acceptance of a happy bureaucrat who can also write good poetry would have presented a contrast to, and perhaps suggested the need for a more critical appraisal of, Lampman's image and work.

Another extensive study, The White Savannahs (1936) by W. E. Collin, accords Lampman an even more central importance. Though he concludes that Lampman's work "falls short of greatness" and "disappoints us" because he did not know "life as well as he knew flowers,"[22] Collin devotes a significant space to the poet. Despite the negative comments, Collin is sympathetic to what he sees as Lampman's plight: that of a cultured and sensitive mind cut off from the wider appreciative sphere of readers. When Collin does refer to Scott, it is in the manner of footnotes to Lampman: Scott is the man who remembers that Lampman wished to live his life as a bushman; Scott is a poet whose verse provides a handy contrast to a certain aspect of Lampman's poetry. With both Collin and MacMechan, Scott is defined not directly but by comparison with, or in opposition to, Lampman, who is depicted as a kind of complete nature poet. Later, his execution of Lampman's literary affairs served again to label him in connection with Lampman, and the association of these two names, to Scott's evident disadvantage, was continued. The main point I want to make clear is that Scott was being judged indirectly, not through a study of his poetry or other works.

The other major assessment of Scott has been one of acceptance, but always as a poet and always using a generalized set of thematic and poetic preconceptions as guides. Scott emerges here as a classicist who is an example of the mergings of various strains, sometimes national, sometimes aesthetic. Highways of Canadian Literature, by Logan and French

(1924), has Scott's work serving once again as an example of "the essential Canadian spirit" but the editors also assert that Scott accomplishes a merger of Old and New World cultures:

> Unless the reader and the critic of D. C. Scott's poetry first realize that the mind and art of the poet are a product of Canada and the Old World, a rare commingling of Canadian and European cultures, they will fail to understand how he is at once the least prolific and, to give him his outstanding distinction, the most exquisite artist of Canadian poets, not excepting Lampman and Bliss Carman.[23]

What emerges from the Logan and French essay is the idea that Scott somehow has more control, more mastery of form than his contemporaries, but the authors never subject their musings to rigorous scrutiny. Their observations suggest that Scott represents some kind of melding of romantic emotional intensity with classical detachment and restraint, an idea that gains favor with successive critics. Lionel Stevenson, in Appraisals of Canadian Literature (1926), calls Scott "Canada's greatest master of subtle and poetic form,"[24] but his criticism relies heavily on impressionistic comments such as: "In the poetry of D. C. Scott the magic of the forest is haunting and memorable."[25] Critics intuit some difference in Scott, but they are unable to put a specific name to it, and, when hard pressed, like Stevenson, they fall back upon the romantic elements they assume are present in his work.

A number of trends become evident at about this time in Scott criticism. There is the assumption, first, that Scott must be defended against a boorish public. In his 1927 work, An Outline of Canadian Literature, Lorne Pierce writes:

> The most curious criticism ever made of any author was written by a Canadian critic regarding the complete poems of Dr. Scott, "His greatest fault is too many subjects." In other words, too

> many ideas; and since when were ideas a fault? . . . His short stories have approached perfection, but they are too finely wrought and too quiet to win acclaim where noisy standards prevail. . . . Scott is a poet of ideas.[26]

Pierce is making a judgement not so much upon the work of the poet in question as he is about the taste and capacity for understanding on the part of the Canadian reading public. Scott is set up as a sort of opposing force to "noisy standards," a role which following critics frequently ask him to play.

V. B. Rhodenizer, for instance, summons forth the work of Scott as an example of "that which Canadian literature in general (there are isolated exceptions) stands in the greatest need, namely artistic conscience."[27] This artistic conscience, he goes on to say, is manifested in Scott's critical study of the world's best literature, painting and music, and in the poet's "conscientious and painstaking" attention to literary techniques. Unfortunately, Rhodenizer does not go on to support adequately his claims; instead, he concludes that Scott may be the greatest Canadian poet and that his poetry "calls for a more cultivated and refined taste than that of any other Canadian poet."[28] Scott becomes a model against which the work of other poets and the critical tastes of the public are measured. Later, in 1943, E. K. Brown adopts a high view of Scott, but acts as if the studies by Logan and French and Rhodenizer do not exist. He criticizes the opinion held by MacMechan in 1924, then speaks as if Scott had been a virtual unknown until Brown's own time. The reasons given for the poet's relative obscurity are the inability of the public to keep pace with the poet's skills and his "originality," and Scott's own lack of a forceful public persona:

> Carman and Roberts and even minor figures such as Wilfred Campbell and Tom MacInnes were legends in their prime; in varying ways they embodied what the public expected a lyrical poet to be. On whatever they did, wherever they went--and they wandered and turned their hands to many things--they printed the mark of a peculiar personality, self-centered and striking.[29]

Brown's comments come close to sounding indignant (he does not include Carman or Roberts with Lampman and Scott in his section entitled "The Masters") in his defense of Scott, but he is more restrained than Desmond Pacey in this respect.

In 1948 in The Canadian Forum and again in 1952 in Creative Writing in Canada, Pacey laments the slight impression Scott has made upon the Canadian reading public. By 1958, Pacey is still able to write of Scott as an unjustly ignored poet. In so doing he follows directly the lead of Brown, and says:

> Scott is, and has been, the least known of the Canadian Group of the Sixties. This is partly because he lacked the gifts of self-advertisement that at least two members of that group--Carman and Roberts--possessed in abundance . . . . Another factor in his relative obscurity is the regularity of his personal life: he did not abruptly leave Canada for the United States, as did Roberts and Carman; he was never the subject of gossip concerning alleged sexual irregularities; and he did not die young, as did Lampman, and thus become an object of compassion. Instead, for over fifty years, he served patiently and efficiently as a member of the Federal Civil Service, was twice happily married, and lived to publish three books in his eightieth (and final) year.[30]

Perhaps unwittingly, Pacey is helping to create for Scott the kind of compassion Lampman evidently received. In so doing, he belongs to the second major group of critics who felt that Scott was ignored simply because he was a superior poet who rose too high above the public's tastes.

Of course, this assumption says as much about the changing tastes of the Canadian critical establishment, which wished to see itself turning away from an outdated romanticism based in nature, as it does about Scott's writing. Criticism had begun to be highly condemnatory of the extreme emotionalism of the Romantics, and it was a natural outcome for some figures such as Carman and Campbell to experience a slide in esteem while others such as Scott were elevated.

Another trend appears as critics attempt to come to grips with the intellectualism they perceive in Scott: a thematic criticism which attempts to define the Canadian national character seeks to legitimize its position by coining a specialized vocabulary when discussing the work of Scott. Beginning with Bernard Muddiman in 1914 and continuing with Logan and French, the phrase "restraint and intensity," or variations of it, is used so often and repeated by so many different writers that the concept becomes enshrined as a central critical statement with regard to Scott. The clearest proof of this situation is the only book of collected Scott criticism to date, Stan Dragland's Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism (1974), which uses the concept as a unifying device for the essays presented.[31] A close look at this volume reveals the critical method of most Scott criticism and the problems associated with the method.

In his Introduction, Dragland describes the assembled critics as being among the most perceptive to have written on Scott; the only ones left out are those who articulate more detailed thematic interpretations of Canadian literature as a whole. Roy Daniells, D. G. Jones, and Northrop Frye especially, are referred to throughout the book in editorial comments, but Dragland says he feels that they are too important to have their views abstracted from the larger works with which their names are associated. The influence of Frye's mythic criticism is most evident when Dragland claims that there is a central myth in Scott's work. This comment in itself is not so crucial though, as the means by which the editor tries to define myth:

> there _is_ a myth; a sort of force-field holding in uneasy tension the contrarieties of Scott's experience: Ottawa and the North, Europe and Canada, White Man and Indian, innocence and experience. . . .[32]

By using the term "force-field," Dragland tries to create a sense of a uniquely Canadian phenomenon in Scott that is neither personal nor historical, but mysterious and timeless. Philip Rahv has described the attractiveness that myth holds for certain critics:

> Myth is reassuring in its stability, whereas history is that powerhouse of change which destroys custom and tradition in producing the future. . . .[33]

In his eagerness to establish the presence of a mythic stabilizing force in Scott's work, Dragland ignores the fact that the writer was frequently concerned with subjects and themes which related to historical change. His mythic model suggests a balancing of influences and attitudes which, as I will show in Chapter III with regard to "Powassan's Drum," is simply inaccurate. Nevertheless, Dragland insists that the list of magnetically-linked contrarieties "goes on" and indeed it does--to include a very wide range of interests, all vaguely collected under one thematic tent. The only contrarieties not directly named in this list are "restraint and intensity," presumably because this phrase represents the most central tension in Scott's work and is the one which Dragland will discuss most fully throughout his commentary.

Dragland contributes short introductions to each article, hoping that these will "take the place of the continuity which is, for the most part, missing in Scott criticism" (_DCS_, p. 1). I think that here the editor is naive or intentionally evasive because, though there is a continuous line of thought in the collection, Dragland wishes to take no chance that the reader will miss what he feels is the one real and consistent basis for Scott criticism: namely, the thematic approach involving the concept of restraint and intensity. Not all of the essays fit this interpretation comfortably: some, like the one by Logan and French, the editor accommodates to his needs; others, like the one by Geddes, Dragland finds fault with because it strays too far from the perceived mainstream of criticism. The phrase "restraint and intensity" therefore cannot be ignored by either myself or others wishing to do a comprehensive study of Scott, and demands closer scrutiny in a number of the collected essays.

The first article is not criticism at all, being a speech delivered by Scott in 1922 to the Royal Society of Canada, and the reader may wonder at first why Dragland chooses to include it in what is ostensibly a book of criticism. Coming as it does at the beginning of the collection, one suspects that it is meant to help form a general impression of Scott's work through the poetics revealed. Such a critical method should be viewed with caution, since it should not be assumed that a writer's views on poetics will help reveal with any accuracy the meaning of his work. However, Dragland's prefatory remark shows that this is exactly what he intends, because the essay contains Scott's "own version of 'restraint and intensity' (see E. K. Brown's article) . . ." (DCS, p. 5). Thus, by directing attention to Scott's words later in the speech, "I refer to such sayings as this of Coleridge: 'It is the blending of passion with order that constitutes perfection'" (DCS, p. 15), and by parenthetically referring to Brown, Dragland lends credence to the restraint-intensity notion by uniting the poet's own reflections with those of a selected critic.

Dragland is somewhat apologetic about including Bernard Muddiman in his group of critics, noting that Muddiman shared with a number of earlier critics the unfortunate tendency to use European, and especially British, models as touchstones when judging a Canadian poet's work. Muddiman's essay in fact abounds with this type of analysis, claiming that Scott's "Adagio" is "pure Keatsian" or that one line is "worthy of Arthur Rimbaud himself." When Muddiman attempts to talk about a poem directly, he uses the most generalized impressions imaginable:

> The highly sensuous imagery of the verse rushes on at a fine pace. There is a fuller elation, a wider ecstacy, a happier buoyancy here than one finds in Duncan Scott's other work. Every now and then gushes forth pure music. . . . (DCS, p. 39)

The question arises: if Dragland himself recognizes the obvious deficiencies of this article, why did he include it at all? The answer lies in his introductory comment:

> Still, there is discernment in Muddiman's detection of "passionate refrainment", his version of the quality of mingled "restraint and intensity" that E. K. Brown noticed in Scott's poetry, and which Scott himself (speaking of poetry in general in "Poetry and Progress") called the "blending of passion with order." (DCS, p. 29)

The linking of names here is important: Muddiman's inclusion is legitimized by his similarity on one level with Brown, and both in turn are given credence because their views seem to tally with the poet's own. Now, Dragland is ready to postulate a guideline for judging the accuracy of all critics of Scott, past, present and future:

> Few of Scott's more perceptive critics fail to acknowledge or formulate their own variation on the theme of "restraint and intensity" which remains a useful phrase even though it may be partly responsible, along with words like "austerity", for creating the image Scott has always carried, of a "poet's" rather than a people's poet. (DCS, p. 29)

Through the rather minor figure of Muddiman, Dragland creates the sense of continuity he earlier said was missing in Scott criticism. The fact that restraint and intensity have not been defined or thoroughly discussed thus far does not seem to bother Dragland: he is preparing the reader's way for Brown, who evidently will make all things clear.

The Logan and French essay provides a strong contrast to Muddiman's, a fact which is obvious to Dragland in a number of ways. He notes that they are "thorough and interesting" on the subject of music in Scott's poetry, but he chooses to avoid the fact that their analysis is, comparatively speaking, much more rigorous and critically astute than Muddiman's. An example of some of their better work occurs in a discussion of Scott's application of musical technique to poetry:

> In one instance, Scott has made the most happy and ingenious use of what musicians call 'chord suspension'--that is, the retaining in any chord some notes (or tones) of the preceding chord. Scott achieves it finely in this cadence:
>
> With the thrushes fluting deep, deep,
> Deep on the pine-wood hill. (DCS, pp. 53-54)

This kind of specific reference to words and lines of a poem, followed by a judgement, does not always occur though, as the writers refer to one part of "Variations on a Seventeenth-Century Theme" as being "a fetching bit of lively ballad-song," or another part as a "pretty and winning poem for children." On the whole, however, Logan and French are much more technically exacting than Muddiman, and it is this characteristic which

Dragland finds irritating because they "slide [Scott's] themes into the background" (DCS, p. 41) in the process. Even so, he finds something redeeming in their observation of Scott's "rare commingling of Canadian and European cultures," a phrase which Dragland then uses as a springboard to a comment by Frye regarding Scott's "imaginative balance" of Canadian and European backgrounds. All roads, Dragland reminds the reader, eventually lead to the imaginative balance found in the theme of restraint and intensity.

The Raymond Knister essay is very brief when compared to the length of the other articles in the volume, and though it opens a potentially important area for critical research, the conclusions made are only tentative. Knister thinks that there is a unity of structure in the 1926 collected Poems, but sometimes he has an odd way of stating this belief, saying that the book is as readable as most novels. Dragland's own comment best sums up the usefulness of the article: "it is a subterranean unity that Knister has in mind; he discovers an organic sensibility behind Poems; he feels a backbone, though he leaves the task of uncovering it to others" (DCS, p. 65). The kind of backbone Dragland would like to see made more clearly evident is likely a thematic one and, perhaps unintentionally, the Knister essay itself offers an excellent negative introduction to the one which follows; if the Knister essay is a good example of how not to discover a unity in a work, the Brown essay shows how the discovery of unity may be made through the illumination of the restraint and intensity concept.

Dragland writes only a short introduction for Brown because, evidently, "the most rigorous and penetrating of the critics who knew Scott well" has already been alluded to a number of times in other introductions; indeed, we have seen that much of this collection and its editorial comments are meant to ready the reader for the restraint and intensity concept offered by Brown. In what is by now a familiar tactic, Dragland tells his readers that the restraint and intensity idea must have a sound basis because first, Scott particularly liked the phrase, and second, it is Brown's authority which has ensured its acceptance in critical circles. In the essay itself, Brown uses the phrase or variations of it no less than a dozen times, as if its meaning had been well established. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

A major problem with the use of the term in Brown's essay is that it is given a number of definitions, and some of these vary significantly from each other. Brown first uses the term to describe the psychological effect of Scott's "The Magic House" upon the reader:

> At the end of the piece, although it is evident that the woman passed through a variety of states, one does not know where the turning point, or turning points, lay. Just what these states were it does not greatly matter; nor does it greatly matter how she passed from one to another; what does matter is a diffused sense of agonies undergone in silence. The reader feels dimly oppressed--an effect of restrained intensity. (DCS, p. 79)

The things which do not "greatly matter" are those which might lend themselves to closer analysis (such as the use of images); the things which do matter are generally apprehended (such as dim feelings). Without being too critical of Brown's writing style, it is worth noting in this instance that he uses a dash as a signal of an assumed common understanding between writer and reader. The implication is that "restrained intensity" need not be explained because the feeling of dim oppression is one of its obvious effects in this instance. Brown begins by assuming that the term is more or less self-evident and then continues with this assumption, as is shown by this sentence, which is followed immediately by a quotation from "At the Cedars": "What I mean by an attempt at restrained intensity of manner will be evident from so brief a passage as this, especially from its laconic close . . ." (DCS, p. 79). Brown does not make clear which words in particular he has in mind, whether he is thinking of a contrast of images, or a particular use of sentence patterns. Instead, he follows the quotation with another general observation:

> It is significant that in such a subject, new to Scott and treated in such a bold and simple fashion, the same fundamental quality is evident. It is significant because it appears to point to something permanent and instinctive in his practice, permanent and instinctive in himself. (DCS, pp. 79-80)

Is the incident described in Scott's poem an example of restrained intensity because it is violent, emotionally disturbing, and yet at the same time treated by the poet "in bold and simple fashion"? The answer remains speculative because Brown does not make himself clear.

The closest Brown does come to defining his terms occurs in Section IV of the essay, when he tries to join ideas of theme and form in his argument: "A search for the adequate theme and the adequate form in which restrained intensity may express itself--here is the emotional center of Scott's work" (DCS, p. 80). Later in the same section, it becomes clear that Brown is working with the old problem of the division of form and content in a work. Speaking of the poem "The Mission of the Trees," he describes an evident division of effect created by "a liquidity and regularity of rhythm that has nothing whatever in common with the bitterness of the experiences they relate." Brown then poses a question which points in an obvious direction:

> How can one explain the amazing discrepancy between form and substance? The substance was to give the intensity, the form the restraint. Scott here was satisfied with a balance that is mechanical, a balance that was achieved by setting two entities side by side and making sure that they had the same weight. For the greatest effects the balance must be organic: the intensity and the restraint must fuse. (DCS, p. 81)

At least one significant problem arises with this formula, even if the Coleridgean kind of reconciliation of opposites Brown employs is accepted: how can two or more critics hope to agree upon the kind or degree of either restraint or intensity present in a poem, using this approach? Looking at the lines Brown quotes, the reader gets some idea of the difficulties emerging:

> Then the cloud was spent at midnight
>   And the world so gleamed with snow,
> That the frosty moon looked downward
>   On a moon that glowed below. (DCS, p. 81)

Brown says there is "intensity of effort" and "intensity of conflict between man and nature" in the poem, and that the poem does not really work because of the presence of lines such as the ones above, which are too restrained. But in order for his thesis to work, should he not be illustrating the fusion of restraint and intensity within the same lines, not between different passages? He is in fact comparing the intensity of substance at one point (the emotional impact of the deaths of the father and the son) to the restraint of substance at another point (the peacefulness of the scene quoted above), which is a dramatic departure from the substance-intensity, form-restraint unity he implies is found. In one instance, the formula seems applied to one line or one scene, in another, the characteristics are found in separated examples: the guidelines seem to change with the demands of a given situation. A critic can get himself into serious difficulties using this approach, and Brown often finds that he can only say that his observations must be self-evident:

> The first of the pictures in "The Forsaken" is given in short lines, but it leaves an effect not of sharpness but of lucidity and firmness. This is partly because the lines are unshaped, but the absence of rhyme is not really a cause but merely a concurrent effect of a difference in mood. What this mood is becomes more evident in the second picture, where the lines lengthen and the (tragic) note deepens. (DCS, p. 82)

Brown quotes nine lines, but never names this mood, and since so much of his preceding comments hinge upon an understanding of this mood, the reader is left helpless to see how this passage represents the "magical union" of restraint and intensity the critic claims it does.

Much of his essay continues in this fashion, but at times it is clear that even Brown himself is not certain that his formula explains all it should. Towards the end of the essay, he admits that "to some" it may appear that a poem like "Spring on Mattagami" is a "juxtaposition" rather than a fusion of intensity and restraint. He vaguely refers to a "dialectical habit of thought" present in "The Height of Land" and concedes at another point:

> It is to be admitted however, that in the dialectical pieces and passages there is less of the restrained intensity than in such a poem as "Powassan's Drum." It is not easy, if it is possible at all, to be at once dialectical and intense, since one cannot be dialectical and simple. (DCS, p. 91)

For Brown, any exceptions to the rule of restraint and intensity do not seriously detract from its overall truth; for Dragland, the exceptions really do not matter. The validity of Brown's view has been established and succeeding essays merely serve to refine his findings or are found to be weak because they do not conform.

Desmond Pacey's essay, immediately following Brown's, employs the by-now-familiar phrase as if it were a part of the accepted vocabulary of Scott criticism: "The philosophy of life which, in 'The Forsaken' for example, has resonant suggestiveness and restrained intensity, sounds rather flat and dull when he attempts to express it directly" (DCS, pp. 99-100). The phrase receives absolutely no qualification whatsoever in this essay, as Pacey then goes on to discuss what appears to be of greater importance in the poems, their dialectical quality: "There is a dialectical pattern to most of [Scott's] poems: two forces battle one another until their powers are spent or their differences resolved and peace ensues" (DCS, p. 100). Pacey finds the element of conflict to be central to Scott's poetry and it is this part of his analysis which Dragland thinks is of supreme importance. Dragland, in his introductory note, uses Pacey as a direct lead-in to identify a dialectical pattern in the Canadian consciousness, a pattern which he says sees its archetypical presence in Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Scott the man is a representative Canadian because he evidently harbored so many opposing values within himself. Borrowing directly from Frye, Dragland notes that Scott learned to accept the wilderness because "he erected no garrison around himself" (DCS, p. 95). A major reason for including Pacey's essay, then, is that it seems to bring together the intensity and restraint model with the more generalized thematic interpretations put forth by Frye.

The two essays by A. J. M. Smith are, according to the editor, notable for two reasons: one, Smith's appreciation or insight increases from one essay to the next, and two, this growth on Smith's part was probably due to the fact that "he discovered tremulous qualities in Scott's verse, irresolution in resolution, a refinement of the idea of 'restraint and intensity' . . ." (DCS, p. 103). Though Smith does mention intensity and restraint in his first essay, it is in the second where he attempts to apply the concept in a more detailed fashion; he too, like Brown, runs into serious difficulty in the process.

Smith first identifies what he feels are two distinct styles in Scott's work, a "tremulous, colorful, sensuous one and a calmer, more tightly controlled, and possibly more mature one" (DCS, p. 116). He then goes on to make a very broad statement regarding the characteristics of genuine poetry as being the "union of intensity and clarity" without bothering to examine the mechanics of such a union. He gives a number of instances of images which have a strong sensuous quality, but does not delineate the workings of restraint. For instance, in his analysis of the poem "By the Seashore," he says he finds this a more "mature and satisfying poem" because of the presence of "the restraint, the irony, and the controlled passion." Smith does not show how the passion is controlled, whether it is by means of structural devices in the poem, or by some kind of psychological control emanating from the poet. In place of this closer analysis of the poems, Smith, like other critics before him, falls back upon biographical details to enhance his argument, saying that Scott's strong love of nature was tempered somehow by the restraining impulses of a good background in the classics and poetry in general. On the whole, Smith's "refinement" of Brown's ideas acts to hinder, not help, the effectiveness of his study.

Most of the essays remaining in Dragland's collection do not command the same respect from the editor as those before and including Smith's; this may be partly because these last articles to not concern themselves so directly with the restraint and intensity viewpoint. The best thing Dragland can say about Milton Wilson's article is that he at last discusses "The Piper of Arll," a poem most other critics barely mentioned. Similarly, the superficial study by G. Ross Roy indulges in what Dragland rightly labels "nibbling at Scott," though the editor uses Roy as a means to return to a thematic focus through the Indian and Wilderness poems. D. G. Jones, again, is summoned as the authority in this area, someone who notes that these poems say something important about the "Canadian wilderness as a state of mind" (DCS, p. 139). In case his readers might be distracted from the true way of reading Scott, Dragland provides them with constant touchstones or reminders.

Thus the essay by Gary Geddes is shown to be basically inaccurate because it chooses to see "The Piper of Arll" as a statement of Scott's poetics and, therefore, as a key to reading his other poems as well. Dragland makes his position clear:

> I think the poetry as a whole tends not to support [Geddes]. The danger lies in regarding the fascinating "Piper" as the key to Scott. The fact is that it stands technically apart, though it does connect thematically with the dream poems and the poems about the collision of cultures. (DCS, p. 163)

While Dragland may be right in saying that no poem should be regarded as a "key" to a poet's work as a whole, he does not explain what he means when he says "The Piper" stands technically apart. Even with the criticism of Geddes' approach taken into account, it is important to note that Dragland nevertheless has seen fit to include the essay. Geddes, like previous critics, employs the term intensity and restraint and otherwise pays his respects to Brown. The essay's presence reflects the editorial bias already established.

The final essay, by Melvin Dagg, is a critical failure because it has a vengeful sociological message at its core. The catalyst for the essay was an article by Keiichi Hirano which appeared in Canadian Literature. The article by Hirano is a national disgrace, Dagg says, "not because of its misinterpretation of Scott, but because of its erroneous, indeed damaging, remarks on Indian mythology and religion" (DCS, p. 190). In his zeal to establish the importance of Indian religion, Dagg makes some absolutely startling remarks about the criteria for judging good poetry from bad:

> The poem ("Watkwenies") is successful because, unlike "The Forsaken" and Scott's other "doomed figure" portraits, it presents the Indian triumphantly, both in the past, and the present. (DCS, p. 186)

Dagg's criteria are of the narrowest political kind, and reduce Scott's poems to mere political documents, and yet Dragland makes no notice of this obvious weakness in his introductory note. The reason for this editorial lapse seems clear enough: Dagg provides a consistent ending to the strong thematic inclination of this book of essays. Much of what Dagg says is an attempt to see Scott's poems mythologically and, predictably, Dragland agrees that Scott revealed the important world of Indian myth in his poems, though sometimes without being fully aware of the significance of the works.

The Dagg essay is an example of the kind of lapses in judgement which can easily occur when a critic allows himself to be guided too rigidly by a single principle or thematic design. Throughout Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism, there is a desire to see the combination of restraint and intensity revealed in thematic terms; one result is that the editor turns a blind eye to serious critical flaws in order to support the thematic premise. Because this is the first critical book dealing solely with Scott, Dragland has the opportunity to provide readers with a useful selection of viewpoints; instead, he misrepresents Scott by using too narrow a focus. On the other hand, it may be said that he does fairly represent the generally poor quality of Scott criticism.

The influential hand of Northrop Frye moves with authority in the background of much modern Canadian critical writing on Scott, not only Dragland's, and requires further comment. In 1951, Frye articulated a distinctive view of Scott which he was to repeat on a number of occasions:

> Whatever one thinks of the total merit of Scott's very uneven output, he achieved the type of imaginative balance that is characteristic of so much of the best in Canadian culture. . . . On the one side he had the world of urbane and civilized values; on the other, the Quebec forest with its Indians and lonely trappers. He could write a poem on Debussy and a poem on a squaw feeding her child with her own flesh; he was at once primitive and pre-Raphaelite, a recluse of the study and a recluse of the forest. Not since Anglo-Saxon times, it seems to me, has there been the same uneasy conflict between elemental bleakness and the hectic flush of a late and weary civilization that there has been in Canadian poetry and painting of the period from Confederation to the depression.[34]

Frye reiterates this division of the self which he thinks is typical of the Canadian cultural character in his Conclusion to the Literary History of Canada, referring in passing to Roy Daniells' essay on Scott. Daniells feels that although Scott may not be a major poet, he is important in that he illuminates a special Canadian attitude towards nature which feels both alien from nature's violence and yet a part of its deep mystery:

> This perception, deep and vague, corresponds so well to the permanent needs and possibilities of the Canadian mind that Scott is everywhere felt to belong among the little group of

> ancestral voices, indispensible to our tradition, haunting to the imagination.[35]

Implicit in Daniells' remarks, and carried to a larger thematic scheme based on myth by Frye, is the belief that a number of writers hold the key to understanding the collective Canadian mind, and that Scott is one of these. It follows that once the general pattern of this understanding has been discovered, the truly significant poems by the poet will provide fitting examples as support for the thesis. Doug Jones offers a complex and intriguing version of this process; Margaret Atwood, a grossly simplified version.

For Jones, in Butterfly on Rock (1970), there is no question of Scott's importance; the poet's work appears as an integral part of a number of discussions. "The Piper of Arll," for instance, has a variation on what Jones sees as the "exiled Adam" theme in Canadian literature, though in this case Adam becomes a figure of the drowned or exiled poet. Present in Scott's piper-poet figure are the conflicting impulses of Thanatos, or death, and Eros, love:

> The struggle between Eros and Thanatos, which is here so decisively won by Thanatos, becomes more open and violent as Scott's poetry develops. If the sleeping shepherd may be said to wake, he often does so only to rise and weep. Nevertheless, there is a deliberate attempt to recover the dynamic life which here lies sunk and to affirm what Scott calls "the beauty of terror" as well as "the beauty of peace."[36]

Jones presents a picture of the poet as divided not only in his response to his society but to nature at large. The poet and the members of his society are caught in a "cultural confusion" which either tries to withdraw from the challenges of a hostile environment, or tries to impose itself even more strongly upon that environment. The challenge, as Jones sees it, is to find a way of affirming an ambiguous and seemingly hostile creation; he therefore sees Scott revealing this national confusion in poems such as "At Gull Lake, August 1810" and "On the Way to the Mission" which gather in violence, only to culminate in an uncertain peacefulness. Scott in this way is linked to poets like Pratt and Birney who "have taken up the theme where Scott left off, for it is a theme that remains central to twentieth-century poetry."[37] In doing so, Jones identifies Scott as a member of a central Canadian tradition based upon thematic interpretation. Margaret Atwood, in Survival (1972), adopts a very narrow thematic outlook based upon the idea of victims and survivors in Canadian literature, but her choice of Scott material does not argue a thorough knowledge of his work since she refers fleetingly to traditional examples like "At the Cedars" while ignoring poems like "On the Way to the Mission" which could have given more support to her thesis.

To summarize the present state of Scott criticism is, in effect, to recognize the powerful hold the ideas of Northrop Frye have upon contemporary critics. One of the continuing influences that Frye has had originates in his insistence upon the power of the imagination to order the reality of the world. The aim of this insistence is to see man freed from the constraints of the material order of things and, as Gerald Graff says about Frye in another context, "The dependence of human choices upon objective facts would constitute for Frye an enslavement of man to the determinism of the external world."[38] What is striking about the criticism written by Frye and his followers in Canada is that Scott is not read as an artist who might perceive the external world as ever having a reality independent of the ordering impulses of the imagination. Frye says, for example, that Scott "achieved the type of imaginative balance that is so characteristic of so much of the best in Canadian culture." Frye's conclusion is based upon his observation of certain oppositions, such as the one between primitive and civilized values, in Scott's work and is important in that the evident balance is "imaginative," or, a function of the artist's ordering vision. Scott's success, by implication, is the result of his having avoided the dangers of an unbalanced vision or one, in other words, which included choices based on a rational view of the external world.

The extent to which Frye's views on rationality have affected Scott criticism is apparent in the Scott Symposium essay by John Matthews. In remarks which also show an indebtedness to Margaret Atwood, Matthews demonstrates great rhetorical agility as he argues that the very landscape in Canada is itself resistant to logical understanding:

> Canadian experience has always shown the need to reject the logic of either/or. Survival has indeed been a prime end, but it has never been survival of the meagre cliff-hanging variety--the survival impulse of victims. It has rather been a response to a world full of challenges, but also full of the zest of life and vigour of active response. Premises "unnatural" elsewhere are here made natural. The very ambivalence of the Canadian extremes--size, climate, language, wealth, racial mosaic--make mutually excluding and polarizing definitions always simplistic and usually destructive.[39]

Applying this theory about national character to Scott, Matthews discovers that the writer cannot stand the idea of "mutually exclusive antitheses." Instead, Matthews claims, Scott thought that contraries which demanded a choice imposed a kind of captivity upon the self and so held that "the co-existence of widely diverse contraries is a precondition for the full life." It is interesting that Matthews defines a fuller, freer life as one where the individual denies himself the freedom of making a choice between alternatives. The will to act and choose is, to borrow an image from Frye, a virtual prison of reason, a garrison of civilized thought separating one from the "ambivalent" world.

The idea that choosing between alternatives makes the person doing the choosing a captive is more boldly stated in the essay by Gordon Johnston. Even though Scott managed in the wilderness to escape the limitations of the Church, Johnston says, the poet "was still bound by the structures of a reason-based culture, one which demands a single answer to every question, but works in terms of conflicting dualities." Johnston condemns the "simplifications of polar thinking" and claims that the major poems by Scott are those which

> contain, rather than restrain their ambiguities. They are the ones in which the rational distinctions disappear, where the conventional groupings of the distinctions are questioned, tested, felt, shattered, and abandoned; for example, when the progress-soul-civilization-goodness group does not hold together in the light of experience; that is, when Scott escapes temporarily the dominance of the rational mind. . . .[40]

What Johnston shares with Matthews, but states more emphatically, is the belief that rationality is reductive, imprisoning, a hold-over from an outmoded European culture. Canada is a new place, Johnston says, "a good place to break down antiquated rational structures, to recognize the powers of the non-rational, to write poetry. . . ." And because he was a Canadian poet, and a good poet according to Johnston, Scott must be read as promoting and embodying a national literature which grows to maturity by striving towards irrationality and irresolution.

Johnston is only the latest to write in a critical tradition remarkable for its continuity of theoretical views. Giving recognition to this tradition, Johnston opens his essay by saying that "E. K. Brown's notion of 'restrained intensity' provides a clear basis for judging Scott's excellences,"[41] adds that he only wishes to attempt a revision of

Brown, and otherwise offers an analysis which in effect contributes details to Northrop Frye's overview of Scott and Canadian literature. But Johnston and others belonging to this distinctive critical outlook are intent upon using Scott as an illustration of Canadian consciousness evolving towards a dialectical or balanced state, and poems which demonstrate exceptions to the argument are usually deemed weak or not typical of Scott's achievement.

The difficulty posed by this critical tradition, for any reader willing to take the time to read Scott thoroughly, is that the exceptions are far too numerous to be considered either irrelevant or aberrant. In order to say, as Johnston does, that Scott valued the "non-rational," the reader must ignore, for example, the numerous portraits of headlessness and head wounds, which symbolize a self-destructive irrationality. Also to be avoided are the works, such as "The Height of Land," and "Chiostro Verde," which show historical change as an external reality that demands recognition and rational choice from a painfully introspective and vacillating narrator. And, finally, the reader must avoid reading the whole of The Green Cloister, where Scott presents a persona who attempts to restructure reality. The attempt, Scott shows, involves a denial of the external world, and it is a project which must fail.

In their desire to deny that he accepted certain external truths and realities, the critics I describe have also denied the reality of Scott's interaction with his intellectual environment. For better or worse, we have to recognize that while Scott was a Canadian he was also an enthusiastic Victorian. This sense of Scott as a thinker is missing from the criticism because so little has been done to see if his utterances at different times and in different works have any coherence.

There is a coherence of thinking, I believe, as well as a clear congruence of ideas with those current during Scott's formative years as a writer.

CHAPTER II

TO BRING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

During the development of Scott criticism, the most serious and consistent error in interpretation has been the failure to appreciate the importance of Scott's desire for a sense of order in society and in his own life. Critics, hoping to see an imaginative ambivalence in Scott's thinking, say his best work was a creative balance of desires between oppositions such as rationality and irrationality, tradition and progress, and order and change. While it is true that he perceived these oppositions within himself and his society, it is also true that he brought an intellectual emphasis to problems and believed in the necessity of rational choice. The decided tendency in his writing is toward the articulation of two ideals: first, that irrational and potentially chaotic processes of change should be given ordered form and, second, that the individual and his desires should be subordinated to the realities of the community or larger world.

If the desire for order is so central to Scott's thinking, how --a reader might ask--have critics been able to overlook this important characteristic? The answer lies in their refusal to see his work in terms either of his cultural context or of the total output of his literary career. A consideration of these backgrounds opens significant paths of enquiry, an advantage that is immediately evident when one looks at an example of Scott's prose written during his time as a contributor to the newspaper column, At the Mermaid Inn.

In a book review dated 10 September 1892, Scott observes that a biography of Sir George Grey reveals "a most useful and eventful life."[1] Reflecting that Canadians "missed having the distinguished subject of these volumes as our own governor-general," Scott offers the opinion that Grey's was a life of service dedicated to the widening of Western civilization's influence in the world. He notes that in the early 1840's, Grey "administered the affairs of south Australia, and brought order out of chaos, saving the colony from threatened ruin," and that later the commander had sent troops "in time for the relief of Lucknow and the saving of India" (MI, pp. 145-46). Scott's admiration for the ability to bring "order out of chaos" was to be repeated in similar ways in later writings and this early review helps to reveal that a significant degree of consistency existed in the development of his thinking. Also, his approval of a career dedicated to imperialist expansion and rule suggests that he tended to define his desire for order in ways that were compatible with certain Victorian values and aspirations. It is in this contextual sense that Scott may be seen as a representative Canadian, and the value of this way of viewing an historical figure has been described in a study of intellectual history by S. E. D. Shortt.

In The Search for an Ideal, Shortt realizes that the men he has chosen to discuss, all members of Canada's Victorian and post-Victorian intellectual community, had little influence on the events around them or on the thinkers who came after them. Therefore, he endeavors to discover the extent to which these men may be seen as representative of their age: "In effect, what becomes of interest is not influence but congruence, that is, the degree to which a man seems to accord with his society and its values."[2] Congruence of the kind Shortt describes has potential as a critical tool for comparison, and with Scott this potential is certainly present: not only are his literary statements available for comparison with the attitudes and opinions of his day, but his active public roles provide another means to test the extent to which his ideas agreed with those of his society. Scott the literary figure was also Scott the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a Member of the Royal Society, a follower and commentator on music and painting and a contributor to and supporter of theatre in Ottawa. In the sphere of public activity, Scott appears to have attained a high degree of involvement in his society; at the very least, he was in a good position to be familiar with the actions and ideals of his culture. At the most, he may be seen as one whose words and deeds served to reinforce certain dominant attitudes current in English Canada. Those critics who see unresolved tensions in Scott's work imply that he felt torn between the aims and practices of the Civil Service and the ideals of art, that his sympathy for the Indian was at odds with the necessities imposed by his official duties. This romantic critical view might find more validity in a study of Scott's friend Lampman, who believed that his life and creativity were stifled by his job, but available evidence shows that Scott found art and public service to be compatible.

It was, in fact, Scott's association with other Canadian writers such as Lampman which has helped to create the misleading impression that he was a faithful follower of a "vaguely apprehended European Romanticism." Roy Daniells, in the Literary History of Canada, holds this view, and also states that all the Confederation poets "were concerned with Romantic subjects, attitudes and techniques," concluding that the poem "The November Pansy" is the epitome of Scott's "Romantic aspiration."[3] A more careful observation reveals that Scott and his fellow Canadian writers and thinkers were very much caught up in the contemplation of current ideas, and that if a label is desired the term "Victorian," not "Romantic," is more accurate. Studies by S. E. D. Shortt and A. B. McKillop show that Canadians were excited by many of the same topics of discussion as were their British Victorian counterparts, and that the forces of contemporary European culture helped shape their philosophical outlooks.

Scott appears to have been more interested in the ways of approaching problems than he was in the promulgation of specific plans or dogmatic structures. Roy Daniells condemns this quality, saying "The imprecision of his views is in part the result of having nothing specific to oppose."[4] The critic implies that Scott did not understand his cultural heritage and was unable to combine elements of evolutionary thought with the tenets of Christianity, but such a conclusion ignores the fact that Scott was a rather self-conscious member of Canada's Victorian society. Scott knew and understood his milieu well, and for this reason the term Victorian becomes crucial because, although he did not work out a complete personal philosophy, the general methodology of this thought is quite accessible and undeniably a product of his age.

A number of general features of Scott's thinking may be initially identified and discussed in relation to the larger background of Victorian society and culture. An important characteristic of his outlook is an almost obsessive awareness of the contraries or opposing qualities in life. To make this observation as a concluding critical statement--as most critics have done in various ways with Scott--leaves important areas of investigation untouched. Because he often did perceive the world as being characterized by oppositions, it is illuminating, for example, to examine the implications of his simultaneous activities in the rather different worlds of literature and government bureaucracy. It would be too easy, and inaccurate, to say that this particular juxtaposing of experience was a happy coincidence that provided Scott with the examples of tension he needed to write some of his best poetry and prose. In fact, evidence points to the conclusion that he fully expected and even invited the tensions that might arise between different sensibilities and values because he shared with the empirical scientist a curiosity as to the outcomes of conflict and process. Coming to maturity during a time of great social change, he shared with many other Canadians a feeling of mixed apprehension and eagerness with regard to the future.

Canadian thinkers generally were deeply disturbed by the upheaval in their world, and worried that the new social structures lacked the kind of moral center once provided by religion. An article that appeared in 1904 in the Canadian Magazine captures the feeling of many Victorians in Canada:

> The nineteenth century seems to have brought us to the edge of a precipice, and to have left us there gazing wistfully into outer space. . . . [Ours is] an age that finds no anchorage in materialism, yet is afraid to drift; an age that feels that the nineteenth century [scientific] solution of the world problem was inadequate, yet that . . . is too far removed from the solutions offered by the eighteenth century to derive much comfort from them; an age which sees that it must find a solution for itself, but has no data for the task, and as yet can do little more than stand shivering timorously at the brink.[5]

The great challenge, as many of Scott's contemporaries saw it, was to maintain a moral firmness in the face of an ad hoc pragmatism. Two major studies of Canadian Victorian thought, Shortt's The Search for an Ideal and A. B. McKillop's A Disciplined Intelligence, tend to agree that Canadian intellectuals shared a vision that was strongly moral and critically questioning. McKillop sees this vision as being an

> interplay between critical inquiry and moral affirmation within the Anglo-Canadian mind. . . . a central and continuous element of Anglo-Canadian intellectual life--so much so as to constitute a virtual imperative--has been its moral dimension. The term 'moral', it should be noted, is used here in a broad sense. Edmund Burke had used the phrase 'moral imagination' to suggest man's general power of ethical perception, his aspiration to establish and to maintain right order both in the commonwealth and in the soul.[6]

Stated in another way, there were two basic reactions to the age of transition: the idealistic, which maintained that a spiritual emphasis was needed to guide man's activities, and the empirical, which sought practical solutions in the material world. Both views held as an ultimate goal some form of encompassing order. These two views, frequently represented in the writing of the time, were often seen as elements in opposition and were rarely balanced in the thought of any one individual. The dichotomy of ideas tended to separate those who held them into two distinct groups, with two impressions of the intellectual's place in society. There were those thinkers, such as Scott, who hoped that they could somehow adapt to the world while maintaining the essence of their traditional beliefs, but there were others who saw themselves alienated from their world, because an acceptance of the forces of change would imply a surrender to disorder.

Andrew Macphail, an important figure in university and magazine publishing circles, was one who felt he could not reconcile personal principles with the trends of society. He viewed the growth of technology and urbanization with increasing pessimism during his life:

> For half a century, using not only the conventional essay but classical sonnets and plays as well, Macphail issued to Canadian society stormy jeremiads on topics ranging from medicine to higher criticism. Throughout his work, and indeed, in the writing of many of his contemporaries, runs the firm conviction that man and society succeed only as they conform to the dictates of nature.[7]

Nature was easy enough for Macphail to define and he frequently gave examples of what he meant. Society, he said, consists of a natural hierarchy of individuals, each doing best the work for which he is most naturally best suited. If everyone accepts his position in the hierarchy, not only he, but all of society is happier; however, if individuals aspire to positions for which they are naturally unsuited, disorder will result. Following this theory of natural order, Macphail emphasized the importance of the mother to the family home, and the vitality of rural life over the bleakness of industrialized urban existence. His conviction on these matters was shared by many traditionalists of the time, and Carl Berger, in the study The Sense of Power, has shown that this kind of thinking found some of its strongest forms in statements by imperialists such as George Denison:

> One of the fundamental features of Canadian imperialist social thought was an idealized conception of agriculture and a tendency to regard it as the most healthy foundation of national life. Nothing revealed Denison's romanticism more graphically than his deep-seated distaste for industrialism, his abomination of the business credo, and his belief that Canada was, and would always remain, predominantly an agrarian country.[8]

The feeling that disorder followed any major departure from supposed natural order linked Macphail's thought not only to Denison's, but also to that of Archibald MacMechan, who proved to be one of the most uncompromising of the Canadian intellectuals. MacMechan frankly viewed the years after the early Victorian period as a time of dramatic moral decline and blamed the rise of philosophical relativism for the change. He stressed absolute values and, like Macphail, saw in agrarian life an ideal which modern man ignored at his peril. Of course, these men were not unique Canadians in this regard: there is a long tradition of thinkers who have idealized the rural life, including writers such as Oliver Goldsmith, Alexander McLachlan and Charles G. D. Roberts. MacMechan himself thought that the heights of literature had been reached by Tennyson and Walter Scott; in Canada, he believed, only poets such as Lampman rightly infused their work with nature as subject matter and a moral code as an aesthetic.

The basis of concern for many of Scott's contemporaries took various forms: they worried about changing family structures, about the economic shift from the farm to the city, or about the possibility of a widespread moral decline in society. However, for Scott and others, these specific concerns over social change coalesced in the general concern that religious faith might become far less of a vital force in the lives of men than it supposedly had been. Canadians, in this regard, were considering many of the same issues which were being discussed by intellectuals throughout the Western world. Historians of British culture, for example, have noted that it was not until the generations which came to maturity following the 1840s that "on a wide scale, the collapse of traditional certainties" became apparent.[9] The collapse was not sudden but gathered momentum during the nineteenth century and affected a number of major areas of Western thought:

> At issue were some of the most fundamental and pressing concerns of modern consciousness: the validity of engagement on the part of intelligent and sensitive men in the concerns of a rapidly

> democratizing society; the role and tone of literature in that society; and the need to work out a rationale for high ethical striving in the absence of older metaphysical securities.[10]

Perhaps the central crisis of belief concerned the relationship between religion and science. Many observers suspected that this relationship constituted a dualism of incompatible world views and Scott, in poems such as "Meditation at Perugia" and "The Height of Land," was one of many writers who explored the ensuing intellectual tensions. In their conflict with advocates of the empirical, materialist viewpoint, defenders of traditional religious positions seemed to be losing ground:

> Despite science's sponsorship of ideas which eroded Christian faith, its prestige as an intellectual frame of reference steadily increased. Regarded as it was with veneration and hope (for the pure scientists' discoveries and the technologists' practical applications proceeded apace), it finally made unbelief respectable. One's personal rejection of Christianity need no longer be kept to oneself or admitted in confidence to a few intimates.[11]

The erosion of faith at times appeared to be an assault mounted by many enemies, including humanism, agnosticism, and rationalism, and interpretations of evolutionary theory emerged in the social and moral visions of a significant number of literary works.

In Canada, the tension between Christian and evolutionist viewpoints was revealed in the art of writers such as E. J. Pratt. Sandra Djwa describes this tension as being a central concern in Pratt. Her study shows that Pratt's interest in the "conflict between Darwinian nature and Christian ethics" was based on an intellectual tradition "rooted in Victorian evolutionary thought" and developed by literary figures such as Thomas Hardy, T. H. Huxley and Charles G. D. Roberts.[12] When he was optimistic, Scott as one of those men who believed that scientific enquiry added to knowledge and an appreciation of life's mysteries and therefore strengthened the foundations of faith. Reviewing an article for The Globe, Scott agreed with an author who praised science's ability to dissipate "misconceptions" while offering new ideas which "appeal infinitely more to the imagination than anything which they supplant" (MI, p. 302). Characteristically, Scott strove to combine idealism with the demands of pragmatism, and said that it "is almost impossible that a man should be too learned if with his knowledge and acquirements he brings the right spirit to life" (MI, p. 302). There is even some envy for the scientist's vocation in Scott's observation that: "We can form some idea in reading the works of Darwin what a pleasure in life his must have been, as with profound knowledge he compared, observed, and sifted" (MI, p. 302). However, Scott was not consistently optimistic in his view of science or of theories such as evolutionism, and in poems such as "Meditation at Perugia" and "The Height of Land," he reveals the anxiety of a man who realizes that the growth of investigation and knowledge may pose a threat to valued beliefs.

Scott's interest in Darwin is a reminder that the publication of On the Origin of the Species had raised important questions regarding a religious interpretation of the world, but even within the Christian Church itself debate concerning the literal authority of the Bible as an historical document had been growing. Richard Altick, for example, has described the work of those Biblical scholars who saw the Old Testament

> not as a collection of divinely inspired and utterly authoritative books but as a mixed bag of human documents . . . that had been quite fortuitously assembled and endowed long after the fact with divine authority.[13]

Many traditional churchmen turned their backs on the disturbing implications of these views, and ignored as well the liberal avenues of interpretation that had been offered by men such as David Fredrich Strauss, who said that the Bible's value was in the body of symbol and myth it contained. During the Victorian period, the more dogmatic literalists chose not to consider the questions being posed by natural science, adopting instead a position which prompted D. C. Scott to create the satirical sketch of Reverend Enoch Underwood in the Untitled Novel. Underwood is a literalist who

> delighted in the vapid sterility of those notions of the Universe which began with a seven days creation and proceeded through a world-development of six thousand years, to an expectation of the millennium in a century or two.[14]

The Canadian Methodist minister of the novel, Scott shows, ignores the questionings of faith in his religious community and ironically contributes to the stultification of the systems of belief he strives to protect.

The attitude held by Reverend Underwood--and it is an attitude Scott rejects as intellectually uninteresting--is that traditional belief can provide a vision of order, while change, in the form of progressive thought, can only bring disorder and immorality. In some ways, of course, men such as Underwood were correct in seeing that the claims of science were potentially disastrous for certain cherished beliefs. Literal readers of the Bible detected in evolutionism the suggestion that

> the long-cherished theory, that God has created man, in all his pristine perfection, as a special favor, and tailored the universe to his special needs, was finished.[15]

It is no surprise, then, to discover that Canadian Victorians frequently were more occupied in their thoughts with the prospect of the loss, erosion and denial of faith than they were with the transformation of that faith.

Reverend Underwood is purposefully exaggerated with regard to his convictions, but it cannot be denied that a significant number of Canadians (both within the Church and in more secular pursuits) were reluctant to give up the vision of order they thought was necessarily grounded in traditional belief. A great many of Canada's intellectuals of the time were associated with universities and colleges and most of these educators agreed that the institutions had as a major goal the teaching of religious and moral values.[16] By the end of the century, for instance, Archibald MacMechan was being entirely consistent with the religious tradition in British North America when he expressed a strong belief in orthodox Christianity, absolutely denying the validity of arguments that questioned basic beliefs.[17] Andrew Macphail, though more eclectic than MacMechan in his philosophical sources, was nevertheless also a staunch Christian. He did concede, however, that the articles of dogma might have to accommodate themselves to contemporary situations, in order to avoid more cataclysmic disruptions of faith.[18] Even more pragmatic and less typical of the Canadian response was the belief of James Cappon, who placed a social emphasis on Christianity, insisting that the Bible's great value was as a source of guiding values.[19]

What is characteristic about the thought of these Canadian intellectuals is a staunch conviction of the importance of religion to society. Inevitably perhaps, the emphasis of idealistic arguments became less theological and more socially pragmatic and moral by the early 1900's. The new message often was an attempt "to give voice to a social ethic that reconciled traditional religious and humanistic values with science, material improvement, and social change."[20] One of the most active and visible proponents of this trend was Salem Bland, a minister who applied general Hegelian theory to history and religion and envisioned a new form of Christianity based on democratic ideals. His preaching helped initiate in Canada the movement known as the Social Gospel which, Richard Allen observes, sought to inform social reform with "an authority it could not otherwise command."[21] The growth of the Social Gospel movement was one of many indications that idealists would have to make some concessions to the demands posed by a changing world if they wished to play an influential role in their society.

The clear danger for men such as Macphail and MacMechan, who believed in absolute values founded on tradition, was that their idealism would soon make them sound dated and inappropriate to the age, and this is precisely what happened. S. E. D. Shortt calls one of these men, Maurice Hutton, a classical Christian idealist, and observes that Hutton's beliefs quickly became anachronistic in an increasingly materialistic time. Shortt observes that the changes in society were so dramatic that by the 1920's these older intellectuals were overwhelmed by disillusionment,

> so much so that their pre-1914 jeremiads almost disappeared. The older men, in effect, abdicated from Canadian academic publications, leaving an intellectual vacuum. . . . When the older group of intellectuals wrote at all, their articles tended to be somewhat melancholy reminiscences, . . . testimony to the gradual withering of one strain in the history of Canadian thought: nineteenth-century idealism.[22]

In contrast to the weakening influence of traditional idealist thought in Canada at this time, the influence of empirical ideas enjoyed a steady growth. Comte, Mill and Spencer had fewer adherents in Canada than did idealists like Kant, Hegel, and Watson but the empiricists had an impact greater than that suggested by their numbers, becoming directly involved in the processes of social debate and governmental activity.[23] For example, Adam Shortt, who was influenced by John Stuart Mill, was not hostile to industrialization and in fact saw it as an inevitable phase in the continuing progress of man. Although idealistic in the sense that he believed man to be inherently good, Shortt also saw that a limited use of governmental supervision was probably necessary, to be applied as needs became evident. He tried with some success to apply idealistic principles to utilitarian practice and, like D. C. Scott, was active in the civil service, working to increase the efficiencies of the bureaucracy under his control.

Some of the intellectuals who tried to maintain a moral, and even a religious, idealism as they entered government careers looked to famous Victorians such as Matthew Arnold for guidance. Scott, writing to his friend E. K. Brown in 1946, notes that he had rejected the Methodist faith of his childhood, "but I have a strong Faith of my own, you see I spell faith with a capital. . . . Arnold was certainly a great influence with me in the 80's and yet is for that matter."[24] Scott's admiration for Arnold was shared by another civil servant, William Dawson LeSueur: both men believed that Arnold showed the way to a balanced religious view of society. LeSueur, in a number of essays, agreed with Arnold's conviction that there existed a universal order in the world and that it was man's duty to conform with that order.[25] The man who wished to live an ideal, moral life recognized his rootedness in the material world, but attempted to perfect himself according to the standards of a spiritual order. In Culture and Anarchy, Arnold had widened this definition of progress to include a man's commitment to society:

> The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be

> continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward.[26]

Evidently Scott and LeSueur believed that they had found in the civil service the right vehicle to accomplish both individual and social improvement. Scott hoped that his idealism, itself a blend of humanism and Christianity, could be joined with a professional, empirical approach to the practical problems of his day. If he had not convinced himself that he was able to achieve this blending, he might have produced more writing with themes and sentiments like those in the poem "The Harvest."

Published in 1898, "The Harvest" idealistically depicts farm laborers rising in revolt against their oppressive masters, and gains its strength almost entirely from a moral indignation directed against social injustice. While he never publicly repudiated the moral vision of "The Harvest," Scott must have come to realize that the work idealized a condition he could not accept: irrational and violent disorder. What became evident in his civil service work and in his literature of social analysis was a growing conviction on two points: he believed that his world was one experiencing great changes and a continuing clash of ideas and that his society needed guidance to ensure that its progress would be orderly.[27]

In several instances, the men who joined the civil service during this period had earlier felt an idealistic attraction toward socialism. After an initial period of sympathy for socialist politics and general ideas of reform, James Mavor became a vocal proponent of efficiently using, rather than changing, existing structures and economies. He employed empirical theories when the federal government hired him as a freelance civil servant and, among other things, he worked in the

Department of the Interior under Clifford Sifton. While some thinkers around him believed the world to be irreconcilable to their ideals, Mavor saw society as an arena of great potential for experimentation with applied theory. Of those intellectuals discussed in this section of my study, Mavor is the one whose outlook bears the greatest likeness to that of D. C. Scott. Like Mavor, Scott tempered his idealism with a suspicion of socialism, complaining in 1893 that

> We are asked more and more frequently to concern ourselves with the woes which have been brought upon the families and friends of people who have thought the ordinary rules of conduct too arduous for them and who have endeavoured to announce a new edition of the ten commandments, specially revised and annotated. (MI, p. 307)

The problems of society could not be relieved by redefining moral codes, Scott believed, nor by reordering the structures of the dominant society. On the contrary, Scott was in agreement with the belief of men such as Mavor who said that government must play a paternalistic role in guiding society through times of transition. In his reading, Scott looked for historical figures who maintained high ideals while providing managerial assistance to societies experiencing difficult times. These were the people, as he said in his review of the George Grey biography, who "brought order out of chaos." However, because men such as Scott and Mavor rejected the more basic social criticisms offered by socialism in favor of ameliorative and pragmatic solutions, their work helped give bureaucratic strength to a society that was becoming increasingly structured and materialistic.

One of the great forces of social change in Canada after 1867, says Frank Underhill, was "the rush to exploit the resources of a rich half-continent,"[28] and A. B. McKillop holds a similar view, saying that the three decades following Confederation were decidedly political, materialistic and expansionist.[29] One of the things lost in this rush to exploit opportunities was the advocacy of individual or small-group effort, a trend reflected in the decline of the self-sufficiency of rural population centers which had organizations based upon church groups and local economic systems.

Scott had attacked one aspect of individualism in the story "The Return," where the selfish acts of Pierre threaten the well-being of his family and the unifying principles of his community. Ironically, however, the threat to the established social order posed, as Scott saw it, by individualism was matched by a threat which he himself was helping to mount through his work in a professional, managerial bureaucracy. Small town communities in Canada, and in North America generally, simply could not cope with the complexities of the new urban-oriented commercialism;[30] as transcontinental railway lines stretched into rural areas, interrelated bureaucracies of government and commerce shaped the character of the growing towns. Order, seemingly so elusive in the Victorian era, emerged with a new class of professionals, and early twentieth-century idealism came to be articulated as bureaucratic efficiency.[31]

In Canada, as Scott and others like him devoted their energies to perfecting the bureaucratic vision of order, needed reforms of business and commercial practices proceeded slowly. Significant changes were left to members of the business community themselves who, more often than not, worked in the other direction, to restrict competition through the creation of mergers, pools and trusts. These influential businessmen "seldom found any unfair or extortionate combines operating in Canada, except possibly the railways. The only really evil ones were almost always American: Standard Oil, the American Tobacco Company, the United Shoe Machinery Company."[32] The most articulate critics of big business and commercial systems of control were men such as Andrew Macphail, who ignored methods of reforming urban and commercial structures in favor of a plea for a return to an agrarian ideal. What Macphail recognized, and what Stephen Leacock satirized in his fiction, was the fact that business in Canada had become a powerful amoral monolith which was invading all aspects of life:

> By its very nature business sought pecuniary profit without thought for the social context in which it operated. Admitting no goals apart from profits, it was indifferent to nationalism, religion and education. It judged all these only insofar as they related to its dominant concern. Because business interests and the economic calculus were paramount, Canadian growth had been unhealthy and unbalanced.[33]

Though generally disinclined to change basic social structures, Canadian intellectuals saw the imperative need for some form of control in their industrial society and usually conceded that individual moral affirmation would not accomplish their goal. Proof, they thought, lay in the excesses of individualism they perceived south of the border:

> In the United States society was supposedly to be improved by putting man into a free environment; in Canada it was to be improved by putting institutions in a freer environment.[34]

Therefore, while Canadians still saw individual morality in thought and action as an ideal, they increasingly turned to collectivism to achieve the practical ends of order. Collective action "was assuming more and more importance in the shaping of the social and economic order. Labour, business and government alike were yielding to the thrust towards bureaucracy and organization."[35]

The greatest appeal of collective action during these days of transition, expansion and moral confusion was the sense of order which resulted from organized control. The more progressive and pragmatic component of Canada's ideological system was particularly disposed "to rationalize and legitimize power concentrations, stratification and class by stressing the harmony and interdependence of an ordered arrangement of groups and the idea of a community interest served by an activist state. . . ."[36] If such a transformation on the part of Canada's intellectuals at first seems contradictory, even hypocritical in the face of traditional and individualistic conservatism, it must be remembered that idealism in North America was reacting to fierce outside pressures. The idealism of men like Macphail found itself increasingly isolated and ignored by a materialistic world; the idealism of others such as W. D. LeSeuer found itself in transition because the world seemed to demand more than an idealistic moral vision of a united society.[37] Frank Underhill discusses the change in idealism on one particular level, the growth of nationalism in Canada, saying that the dominant tone of society quickly became realistic and practical, rejecting the romantic conceptualizations of Goldwin Smith and Edward Blake.[38] But the relative increase of realistic thought in nationalism does not deny the fact that idealism did continue as a vital force in Canada, as certain individuals saw potential for a greater social good within the framework of existing conditions and events. As Richard Hofstadter has observed with regard to developments in the United States:

> Whenever an important change takes place in modern society, large sections of intellectuals, the professional and opinion-making classes, see the drift of events and throw their weight on the side of what they feel is progress and reform.[39]

Earlier, in Victorian England, Matthew Arnold had looked to the bureaucratic structure of education as a systematic tool for the furtherance of a moral ideal; by the early 1900s in North America, many intellectuals were accepting existing social systems as being potentially progressive, demanding from these vehicles only increased efficiency to meet desired ends. That much-discussed topic of Canadian history, the sense of national identity, was increasingly expressed as a tripartite alliance of federal government, party politics and big business interests.[40] All aspects of material life seemed drawn together in an encompassing standard of efficiency, and since dramatic structural change in the social and cultural framework ran against the dominant anti-revolutionary and anti-radical strain in Canada, intellectuals and professionals sought to affirm order through the vast organizational systems already in existence.[41] Government generally, and the civil service specifically, became English-Canada's working model of a new awareness of order, and men such as LeSueur, Adam Shortt and D. C. Scott were called upon to act as practitioners of the model.

Toward the end of his life, Scott looked back upon his work in the Department of Indian Affairs and remarked that he had inherited a basic system and felt no desire to amend it in its application.[42] Both on the level of personal vision and in the execution of everyday matters, Scott's involvement for almost a half of a century with the civil service revealed his desire for an encompassing sense of order in the world. Few of his fellow Canadians of the time, at least few of those who would have bothered to consider the matter, would have disagreed with his actions in the Department of Indian Affairs. For many people, the civilization of the Indian was part of Canada's grand scheme of expansion, which dated from the mid-Nineteenth Century: "The opening of the West was to be in the name of progress and that progress would be to the benefit of the whole Empire, and, for that matter, all of humanity."[43] The Europeanization of the Indian was simply considered a part of the story of progress, and questions regarding the uniqueness of Indian culture were drowned out by the noise of a nation under construction.

The Department of Indian Affairs had its roots, in practice and in theory, in the earliest days of administration in Canada. The basic principles involved have been accurately described as being "a carry-over of policies developed by the Imperial Government during the century preceding Confederation."[44] From 1815 to and including the time of Scott's own administration, the aims of the Department varied little and sought the protection, civilization and assimilation of Canada's Indians. Government aims, in fact, varied little from the goals of many missionary ventures. One of these projects, for example, took shape as Metlakatla, a Christian Indian village founded in 1862 near the mouth of the Skeena River in British Columbia. The founder, an Anglican lay missionary named William Duncan, tried to replace as much of the native culture as possible with the ideals and practices of a British model:

> For Will Duncan the cultural reference was always London, not Victoria or Ottawa. Metlakatla was not in essence a response to the wilderness or the Canadian frontier, but a systematic attempt to establish a community where Victorian values could shape the future of the Indians of the North Pacific.[45]

Prodded by the missionary zeal of Protestant religious groups, the British initiated in North America a number of plans to civilize the Indian, or to bring him into the realm of European standards of thought and behavior. The long-term goal of the civilizing process was to be assimilation, whereby the Indian would lose completely his set of cultural identities and become an indistinguishable part of the dominant white society. Unlike American policy, which regarded the Indian as a threat and hindrance to westward expansion, Canadian policy gathered form as a result of the desire to protect Indians as individuals who would someday become equal members in the British Empire. Without this protection, it was believed, the Indian would be crushed by the white man's greed and superior technology. Remnants of Indian economies and culture were just as firmly believed to be moribund and a stumbling block to the elevation of the race, to be eradicated as soon as possible. Canadian Indian policy was, in a word, a moral vision concerning nothing less than the salvation of a race of people stripped of all elements of their own heritage.

An evaluation of the treatment of Canada's Indians raises questions regarding the importance of racism as a social attitude of the time. Ironically, perhaps, it was the idealism of some of Scott's contemporaries such as Archibald MacMechan which prompted the strongest racist views. MacMechan's own literary efforts, for instance, produced a collection of sea and adventure stories, Old Province Tales (1924), which praised bygone standards of moral behavior. But in certain of these tales, racism plays a clear role in the creation of character,[46] and in looking at Canadian social attitudes of the period, we can see that MacMechan was not alone in his prejudices.

In Canada, traditional idealists generally and imperialists specifically, as Carl Berger shows, believed that only certain races displayed the capacity for liberty and responsible government:

> That the Anglo-Saxon race displayed a special genius for self-government and political organization seemed as undeniable to many English-Canadians as did the idea that history was a record of progress. Racial explanations were conventional as well as respectable within the cultural milieu of the later nineteenth century and imperialists had no monopoly over them. . . . Sometimes the phrase 'Anglo-Saxon race' was simply a synonym for a total culture which was itself understood to be the product of history and not only racial instincts; sometimes, race was quite explicitly associated with the biological analogies of Darwinian science.[47]

Modern historians and critics have trouble with the racial views held by Victorians, often applying late twentieth-century moral standards when judging these earlier ethical systems. Not surprisingly, D. C. Scott has come under this kind of critical scrutiny with regard to his own supposedly racist views.[48] Robert L. McDougall, identifying what he calls a "kind of mini-literature of Scott criticism" concerned with possible racism, warns against the dangers posed by a narrow sociological view of the poet. McDougall realizes that a historical context should be established for Scott's government work because the poet was responsible for the administration of Indian policy:

> Aspects of that policy, questioned in some quarters even in Scott's day, have proved prime targets for attack in the native-rights atmosphere of the sixties and seventies. Because Scott implemented government policy, apparently without seriously questioning it, he has suffered the Nuremberg taint of guilt through compliance with unjust orders. Particular charges range from duplicity to genocide. And the reputation of the poetry, wrongly I think, is sometimes brought down with the reputation of the man.[49]

McDougall draws needed attention to the fact that liberal critics, in their zeal to uncover crimes of prejudice, have been guilty of articulating an historically prejudiced method which compromises their objectivity. A critical method which tends to make assessments of the literature contingent upon the validity of the morality in question, without considering the larger historical context, never asks what is perhaps the most interesting and vital question of all: "How did racism fit into the larger system of beliefs held by Scott and his contemporaries?" At least part of the answer to this question appears in the fear of disorder that many English-Canadians had at this time. Some, such as Adam Shortt, the civil servant and historian, simply believed that true democracy was impossible for any race other than the Anglo-Saxons to achieve. Therefore, granting other races full social responsibilities would surely weaken the most important institution in Western culture. Scott, who seems to have possessed a personal as well as a professional conviction that assimilation was the answer to the Indian problem in Canada, did not share with men like Shortt and Maurice Hutton the belief that certain races were intrinsically inferior to other races.

Though his opinions were more blatantly stated than those of some of his contemporaries, university educator Maurice Hutton did not hold atypical views on the subject of racism. Hutton looked to Britain as the source of political and social order and was convinced such order arose out of "the racial character of the British people, a blend of instinctive wisdom and resolute honesty."[50] On the most immediate social level, Hutton's views led him to oppose strongly the immigration of non-white settlers to Canada, as these would dilute the greatness of the British racial heritage. For the modern reader these attitudes seem archaic, even intellectually insulting, and the author of The Search for an Ideal, S. E. D. Shortt, is somewhat apologetic for Hutton, saying these intellectuals had the disadvantage of "being educated in an age unfamiliar with social anthropology. . . ."[51] Following the apology, Shortt hastens to add that Hutton's vision of the British Empire "rested on a much broader foundation than race" and represented the British ideal in terms of larger philosophical convictions. While Shortt is probably right, his brief treatment of racism in Canadian intellectual circles denies the fact of its widespread presence and its validity as an historical force to a significant number of people.

Determinism, despite the underlying Victorian belief in progress, was at the heart of the most doctrinaire convictions of supporters of racialist theory. James Cappon, at Queens University, did not favor limiting immigration to whites only, nor did he believe that racial characteristics forever fixed an individual's potential, but nevertheless he thought he was able to discern certain racial types. Cappon was like many of his contemporaries, Shortt notes, in that he "associated certain character traits, with particular nations. The Japanese, for example, combined a European capacity for organization and bravery with a native Oriental cunning and diligence."[52] Though Cappon was not outwardly hostile to non-whites, his typing of people according to their racial backgrounds was entirely consistent with the views held by the majority of his culture. D. C. Scott's views regarding the Indian race may be described as deterministic, but he did not base his outlook so much on a consideration of hereditary factors as on his observation of the evident rigidity of cultural structures. The very repetition of economic and social practices in Indian culture, he believed, negatively determined the shape of every individual Indian's life, and this old continuity would have to be supplanted by the progressive one offered by Scott's own culture.

Because he wished to believe that his social plan for the Indian was justified by something more than a personal idealism, Scott looked for, and found, an historical and moral continuity within the framework of his duties with the Department of Indian Affairs. Scott himself helped chronicle and establish a tradition of history for the Department in three articles written for the 1913 Canada and Its Provinces series, of which Adam Shortt was editor. Scott's first goal in the history is to illustrate the natural superiority of the British method over the French method of dealing with Indians in North America. Not only was the British approach more humane, it possessed a greater degree of organization which was evident from the time of the appointment of the first agent in 1744: "From that date to present there runs through the Indian administration a living and developing theory of government."[53] Scott's respect for the continuity of the organization is everywhere apparent in his study, as is his sense of humanitarian mission. He never questions the "efforts which were made to civilize, educate and christianize the Indians"[54] which, not incidently, were the idealistic aims shared by most members of his Victorian society. The Indian, after all, had been living in a state of "squalor, dejectedness and intemperance," but could, with the help of a paternalistic government, be expected to progress to a higher standard of living. For Scott, there was never any question that the Indian himself would provide the ultimate justification for Department policy, by becoming a fully enfranchised and Westernized member of English-Canadian society.

The key to understanding Scott's attitude towards the Indians lies in one of his earliest published statements on the subject, which appeared as a Preface to The People of the Plains by Amelia Paget. In this 1909 essay, Scott shows an interest in current anthropological theories concerning early Indian history and migration and praises Paget because she seems a "cordial" advocate of the Indian:

> If there were hardship and squalor, starvation, inhumanity and superstition in this aboriginal life, judged by European standards, here it is not evident, all things are judged by the Indian idea of happiness, and the sophistication of the westerner disappears.[55]

The relativism of the above statement seems genuine; Scott did try, here and in other of his writings, to recognize that his view of Indian culture was colored by "European standards," and he was not blind to the failings of "our so-called civilization."[56] Yet Paget, Scott implies, is at last sentimental because she ignores the most important fact about the Indian way of life: that Indians were caught in the progression of time and "the time for change was upon them."[57]

Nowhere in his writing does Scott overtly express belief in Darwinian principles of evolution, but he is convinced that the ability of a group to survive is contingent upon its ability to develop adaptive characteristics. The Indians of earlier times no longer existed and beliefs and practices which once suited their situation had become inappropriate and even dangerous. Potlatches, the ceremonial giving away of wealth practised by tribes in British Columbia, had prevented the establishment of disparate economic groups within a tribe and so ensured a degree of social harmony. However, Scott condemned these events as "degrading," calling them "wasteful feasts" and his position is easy to understand, given his belief that Indian social structures were anachronistic. In a letter to E. K. Brown, Scott defends his hostility to these practices, saying,

> One can hardly be sympathetic with the contemporary Sun-dance or Potlatch when one knows that the original spirit has departed and that they are largely the opportunities for debauchery by low white men.[58]

The moralist in Scott clearly worried about the Indian's inability to protect himself against "vices not his own" introduced by certain whites. But his objections surely went deeper than to the fear of the effects of alcohol and gambling. In white materialistic society, the accumulation and hoarding of wealth ensured the growth of personal power and the establishment of a hierarchy of status and order. If allowed to continue, the Potlatch threatened to prevent the creation of guidelines of Western order in Indian societies. Scott knew that the maintenance of custom and ritual resisted change, and so he continued the government campaign to stop these practices.

That Scott was joining a long tradition of attempts that had been made to change the structures of Indian life is evident when we look at the writings of travellers and missionaries from before his time. Alexander Mackenzie, in his 1801 record Voyages, advised that the civilization of the prairie Indians could only happen if the "savage people" were introduced to agriculture, which

> attaches the wandering tribe to that spot where it adds so much to their comforts; while it gives them a sense of property, and of lasting possession, instead of the uncertain hopes of the chase, and the fugitive produce of uncultivated wilds.[59]

Though Mackenzie emphasized the advantages of comfort and security that agriculture offered, his ultimate intention was that the Indian would discover a more civilized life. The missionary John McDougall, like Mackenzie, was convinced the nomadic life and tribal communism contributed to a moral laxity, and in Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie (1898), he interpreted the disappearance of the buffalo as a divine act designed to direct the Indian to more progressive ways. Dick Harrison identifies the unintentional irony of the missionary's remarks:

> Agriculture, individualism, and progress were surely no more than peripheral to his professed religious beliefs, yet they became the main burden of his mission, and must be the only considerations that could lead a humane man to call the destruction of the Indian's food supply a divine, paternal act.[60]

Mackenzie, McDougall and Scott each in turn saw in the Indian way of life an absence of civilized order; if these representatives of the white world did perceive any patterns or orders among the native peoples, these aspects of order were invariably judged as immoral and destructive.

The most effective way of preventing the perpetuation of supposedly outworn customs would be through the indoctrination of Indian youth, and Scott seized upon existing laws to initiate the transformation. In 1894, amendments to the Indian Act had already given the government the power to commit children to industrial and boarding schools. On March 11, 1920 Scott mailed one of a series of letters to clergymen, politicians and others of influence, asking for support for the government's plan for residential schools:

> You will note first our proposals with regard to compulsory education. These classes will enable us to send children to residential schools and to have control over them while there, which we have never had in the past.[61]

If Indian children continued to live at home while attending school, they would often miss classes and accompany their parents hunting, trapping or otherwise helping the family. Not only did this practice interfere with their formal education, but it ensured that the old economic systems of tribal life were perpetuated as well. Residential schools would enhance the desired civilizing process, and have the added benefit of creating an instant form of assimilation, however artificial and small in scale.

During the years of Scott's administration assimilation, believed before to be attainable only in some distant future, underwent an important conceptual change: "Assimilation was no longer regarded as a long term goal; it was one that could be attained immediately if the Indian were removed from the protective environment of the reserve."[62] The reserve had done its job too well, insulating Indians from the influences of white society. Increased pressures were applied to have Indians enfranchised, or given complete rights the same as whites in society. In other words, if the Indian did not appear to desire to become assimilated, the government would help him along by redefining him as a white man. In 1920, the Superintendent General was given the power to enact compulsory enfranchisement and strip any Indian of his or her special status. Indian protests followed these changes, and Scott defended the government position at a series of hearings on the issue:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. . . . that has been the purpose of Indian education and advancement since the earliest times. . . . Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill.[63]

A more clear and concise definition of the aims of assimilation could not be desired. Not quite so clear, however, is the extent to which Scott sees his own attitudes and those of the Department as being identical. Years after his retirement, Scott was to write:

> I had for about twenty years oversight of their [the Indians'] development and I was never unsympathetic to aboriginal ideals, but there was a law which I did not originate and which I never tried to amend in the direction of severity.[64]

The law existed and Scott claims he was an instrument of established order, but in the hearing testimony quoted above, the issue is in some doubt. Scott begins by using the first person to express a personal opinion, shifts to the plural "Our" after establishing the traditional context, names the Indian Department and ends with that abstraction of law, a Bill. Transcripts of the hearings show that testimony was often heated and Scott may have opened his remarks more candidly than he intended, revealing that after more than seven years under his direction, Department policy was actually policy from Scott's desk. Moral opinion today might find this interpretation attractive, since earlier Indian policy is commonly held to have been misguided, and if blame is to be assigned it is more satisfying to point to an individual than to an abstraction like the law or a cultural belief. It is more likely, though, that Scott's convictions arose not from the formulation of original ideas, but from his unquestioning subordination of self to a social and cultural ideal.

Scott placed his idealistic faith, as did contemporary Canadians of an empirical turn of mind, in the strengths and efficiencies of collective government systems. At his worst, Scott became an eager follower of whatever system was likely to work smoothly, as long as it was legitimized by an historical continuity. This trait also adversely affected his writing, prompting him to pen the fluffy "Farewell to Their Majesties," which aroused adverse criticism from his friend E. K. Brown.[65] In the Department, Scott's work is characterized by an iron resolve to be efficient and, above all, to be right. His use of the hierarchy of power and order within the bureaucratic structure reveals some of the less attractive aspects of his career.

Always in his work with the Department, Scott showed a respect for detail and proper procedure. At times, his ire was roused by those who disagreed with him and who, he felt, merely impeded progress. Such was the case when Scott encountered organized opposition during hearings concerning the government's planned enfranchisement program for the Indians. He afterwards wrote an indignant letter to an administration official, demanding a tightening of procedural rules for future hearings, because "otherwise we would have all the Indian tricksters and stray white men lawyers and others who are intending to profit from an Indian connection. . . ."[66] At other times, the enemy was incompetence. In 1892, while still only a minor official in the accounting office of the Department, he sent a curt letter of reprimand to his subordinate, a local Commissioner of an Indian reserve. The man had approved personally the expenditure of monies needed to improve an agent's house, instead of approaching Scott for the usual procedural approval.[67] Taken together, these two incidents show the impatience Scott had with those who seemed not to share his enthusiasm for the precision and control that he believed were behind the Department's bureaucracy. People often complained about "red tape," Scott explained to one erring agent, but they did not know how essential rules and procedures were to the smooth running of a large organization.

The Scott letters and memos describe a number of disagreements that arose between the Deputy Superintendent and those working under him, but one, concerning William Morris Graham, lasted almost two decades and assumed the proportions of a personal feud. Graham was an Inspector with the Department, based in Regina and responsible for the Western Canadian arm of Indian Affairs. The trouble between Scott and Graham seems to have had at least as much to do with the awkward rigidity of their bureaucracy as with their personalities.

Traditionally, the Department's business in the West was virtually an autonomous operation, under the supervision of the Inspector who, in this case, was Graham. During the early part of Scott's administration, however, the federal government had moved to centralize the Department and thus bring the Inspector's office under the direction of the Deputy Superintendent. Graham, caught in the transition, did not appreciate his loss of power. To make matters worse, this was a time when the scope and plan of the Department's work usually exceeded the funds allotted to do the work. Projects which seemed quite logical and necessary to Graham had to be rejected by Scott, who held final responsibility for the budget. But the difficulties with Graham were undoubtedly compounded by Scott's unwillingness to use liberal, even reasonable, judgment in certain incidents. On more than one occasion, Scott countermanded Graham's local authority or took unilateral steps in making a decision, without informing the Commissioner of the reasons behind the action. More than once, Scott apologized for the "tone" used in previous communications to Graham.[68] A particularly petty act on Scott's part followed Graham's decision, on an inspection tour, to rent an Indian's car rather than use other, more costly means of transportation: Scott simply disallowed the expense, leaving Graham to pay for the rental out of his own pocket.

As the term of their relationship lengthened, though, Scott's appreciation of Graham's position and personality appears to have grown. In a letter defending himself against various charges made by Graham, Scott wrote to the then Minister of Indian Affairs:

> Mr. Graham cannot be written to as we would to another inspector, but our directions must be expressed with as much care as if we were diplomatists addressing a foreign power.[69]

Scott was quite right in seeing Graham as a formidable power; the remark carries the tone of cautious sarcasm arising out of a certain wariness. Graham belonged to the ruling political party of the day, not the one with which Scott had been associated; among the letters written on behalf of Graham to Arthur Meighen is one from the Liberal-Conservative Association, citing his political support (which evidently justified his position in his disputes with Scott). The extent of the political patronage involved is suggested by the fact that Graham's personal secretary was his wife's cousin and his niece was wife to Arthur Meighen. For Scott, who had his first job in the civil service as a result of his father's appeal to John A. Macdonald, the message was clear: the successful operation of his Department depended as much upon the appeasement of political opponents as it did upon the efficient handling of problems posed by the Indians and reserves. In fact, a final example shows that Scott's strict adherence to procedure and his political wariness were justified, because the one known serious lapse on his part in these areas led to his professional downfall.

By the early 1930's, the government found the Scott-Graham feud tedious and the two participants, now both old men, nothing more than cantankerous voices of a by-gone era. R. B. Bennett, who was so busy paying off political favors by issuing padded construction and transportation contracts that he had little time left for the actual administration of government, wanted nothing more than peaceful compliance from his subordinates. Both Scott and Graham had to go, Scott especially because his requests for financing were more than Bennett could accept (after Scott's departure, the Department's organization and funding for projects went into a serious decline that lasted over a decade). In January, 1932 newspapers in Saskatchewan and Ottawa carried a story describing the discovery of liquor sales at a private club on Indian land, a club to which Graham belonged. The sale of liquor on Indian land was, of course, in direct contravention of the Indian Act and Graham was accused of having knowingly allowed the practice. Graham panicked and, in an attempt to avoid some of the responsibility for the error, produced Scott's signature on the lease approval form.[70] The controversy spilled over into the House of Commons question period and, within thirty days, both men had tendered their resignations. The memos and letters pertaining to this incident show that a relatively minor oversight had been used to advantage by parties who were working for a complete re-staffing of the Indian Department, but the fact remains that the maneuver was a success because Scott had been uncustomarily lax in the execution of his duties.

Toward the end of his public career, Scott had published a biographical study of John Graves Simcoe and at least one critic, E. K. Brown, has wondered aloud why Scott bothered with such a "dullard" as the subject of an extensive study.[71] Simcoe's lack of dramatic scope as an historical figure had little to do with Scott's choice of him as an appropriate subject. Rather, the man stood as a model of the attributes Scott himself pursued: he describes Simcoe as a statesman of peace, and a pioneer in the relations between whites and Indians. Scott admits Simcoe had many failings but claims that he was a man of "integrity" who

> although he was criticized, misunderstood, and disliked, it was not often so. These cases oftenest arose from the opposition of his honesty, brusque but open and fearless, to the small plots for gain and preferment that he discovered. . . . But his character held in happy combination traits that made him an almost perfect governor for the time and place.[72]

In Scott's biography of Simcoe, there is the illumination of two preferred attributes of character: a strong moral vision, and a sense of duty to a tradition embodied in a systematic framework. Whether Simcoe was as appropriate to his milieu as Scott suggests is open to more rigorous historical analysis, but Simcoe did serve as an historical precedent for Scott's own career.

For Scott, the existence of an efficient model of bureaucratic order did not in itself ensure that a manager such as he would make the best decisions when faced by complex social issues. He shared with many others of his generation a desire to find representative figures for moral and effective conduct. Walter E. Houghton, in his study of Victorianism, says that this desire often led to a "hero worship":

> To the Victorians a hero might be a messiah or he might be a revelation of God, but he was certain to be a man of the highest moral stature, and therefore of enormous importance to a period in which the alarming increase of both the commercial spirit and religious doubt made moral inspiration a primary need.[73]

It is clear that Scott had his heroes, men who were important to him not only for the ideas they expressed but for the lives and careers they followed. This was the case when, in an essay on Montaigne, Scott concurred with Emerson's choice of the philosopher as "one of the world's representative men" (MI, p. 233). When this essay was published in 1893, Scott was an aspiring civil servant and a budding man of letters, and it is worth noting that he was drawn to a man who was also a literary figure and a public servant. Montaigne had served as mayor of Bordeaux, for example, during a time in France when the country experienced serious intellectual and social tensions. Scott, believing that his own age was similar in some ways to sixteenth-century France, had opportunity to see in Montaigne a model worthy of emulation. The ideas found in the Essays, Scott argued, gave an indication of the "force" the Frenchman could be in the modern world, and there is ample evidence in works such as the story "Paul Farlotte" that Scott was himself greatly influenced by this intellectual force. As a model of an enquiring intellect occupied with questions of religious, moral and social concerns, Montaigne was not the only representative figure of importance to Scott, but he was one who, along with Matthew Arnold, offered proof that the lives of the artist and the bureaucrat could be made compatible.

Scott felt that he had, as far as was possible, exacted a moral ideal from the workings of a bureaucratic system. He might well have said that he too was a man almost perfect for his time, if that time is seen as ending when the Depression begins. English Canadian society was Victorian in its idealistic vision and in its faith in progress, both moral and material. Scott found in the Department of Indian Affairs a clear articulation of Victorian aims, and, by giving concrete form to these aims, he became a kind of cultural representative figure. The extent to which he is representative is not clear, however, without a more detailed investigation into the nature of the beliefs which informed his career and writings. These are most readily apprehended by examining the ways in which he attempted to transform the bases of his religious and philosophical heritage into ideals which would yield useful moral guidelines. In the next chapter, I will show how the ideas which determined Scott's thinking as an artist and bureaucrat throughout his life found early, but similar, form in prose statements that appeared in the Toronto _Globe_ between February 1892 and July 1893.

CHAPTER III

BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE WORLDS: SCOTT'S AMBIVALENT SEARCH FOR ORDER

Part One: Christianity and the Influence of Stoicism

Service, wrote the young civil servant D. C. Scott in an 1892 essay, is a form of conduct with great religious and moral implications. The essay begins with a quotation from Victor Hugo, "One service more is one more beauty," and is an early indication of the direction of Scott's thinking:

> Here the external acts of life communicate with the subtle and divine mind; the link so delicate, so secret, becomes for a moment visible. Into terms of spirit we translate the motions of reality or service, and are aware of the complex reaction of the soul upon itself. (MI, p. 37)

Scott calls his essay a "sermon" and he appropriately illustrates his reflections with examples from Christian tradition:

> And who shall measure the effect, or set a bound to the force of the objective value of service? The washing [of] the disciples' feet, the acts of tenderness and mercy start at once a thousand roots of peace and promise in the heart. (MI, p. 37)

Ideally, therefore, service is more than social pragmatism because the servant's actions are linked to a transcendent quality, and because those actions are reflexive, working to perfect their source.

Scott's observations on the nature of service venture onto theological grounds, but at no time in his life was his strength or major interest in the theoretical and abstract side of religious discussion. Nor did he focus his considerations solely on the character and concerns of his Christian heritage, as might be concluded on the evidence of the above passages. Rather, he took as his central interest the definition of correct action, supplementing his basic Christian belief with the moral aspects of classical pagan beliefs. In following this path, Scott was not unlike the influential Victorian, Matthew Arnold, who said that "the noblest souls of whatever creed, the pagan Empedocles as well as the Christian Paul, have insisted on the necessity of an inspiration, a joyful emotion, to make moral action perfect. . . ."[1] Scott looked for inspiration, his joyful emotion, in a body of belief he capitalized in a letter to E. K. Brown, a desired Faith which determined his commitment to public service and the nature of much of his writing.[2]

The Faith Scott named was in fact an amalgam of literary, religious and philosophical ideas. Roy Daniells labels Scott's belief as being an "unfocussed Christian outlook" which reveals a "residual Christian aspiration,"[3] but these terms fail to clarify the detailed nature of that belief. Scott took guidance from the writings of Wordsworth, Arnold and Tennyson, looked for strength in the essays of Sir Thomas Browne and Montaigne, and sought spiritual and moral exemplars in the lives of historical figures such as Tertullian. Though the general basis of his belief was Christian, Scott saw in Classical Greek and Roman Stoicism a means to calm the legacy of Victorian fear and doubt which troubled him throughout his life. Acting as a principle which held the different Christian and pagan ideas together was an historical vision which saw action and spiritual knowledge subject to evolutionary change.

Few individuals, Scott wrote in 1892, had exerted so great an influence upon the style and aims of his contemporaries as Tennyson and "his influence was all for the good" (MI, p. 170). Scott elaborated on his praise, in terms which reflect much of the importance the British poet had for many Victorian readers:

> The desire for and belief in the ultimate good in human destiny, and the wish for a larger faith and a more hopeful creed, these were the subjects of which he naturally wrote. (MI, p. 171)

Scott recognized and identified that mixture in Tennyson of faith and acceptance with desire and hope which James Benziger, in Images of Eternity, describes as a balance of contradictory ideas:

> So pervasive in Tennyson was the common nineteenth-century progressive or evolutionary cast of thought that he could, almost simultaneously, declare Christianity to be a divinely revealed truth and regard it as being outmoded or outdated for advanced minds.[4]

It is no surprise, then, that Scott chose as Tennyson's "greatest achievement" the poem "In Memoriam," which teaches "Believing where we cannot prove."[5] Scott was able to find consolation in his apprehension of the poet's "belief in the ultimate good of human pain and defeat" (MI, p. 171), even though this belief could not clear away the persistent mysteries of life. Scott too looked for a higher faith which would grow out of Christianity but, in an 1893 poem modelled after Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," he concentrated on the message of acceptance.

"Crossing the Bar" voices the thoughts of the poet as he considers his own approaching death:

> For tho' out our bourne of Time and Place
> The flood may bear me far,
> I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crost the bar.[6]

Death, the final and greatest of life's mysteries, is potentially frightening, but Tennyson reiterates his faith in a divine plan, evidenced by the desired meeting with the Pilot. Scott's poem "The Ideal" uses the same image of a vessel crossing a shallows:

Let your soul grow a thing apart,
  Untroubled by the restless day,
Sublimed by some unconscious art,
  Controlled by some divine delay.

For life is greater than they think,
  Who fret along its shallow bars:
Swing out the boom to float or sink
  And front the ocean and the stars.[7]

Attitudinal differences in the two poems may be partly accounted for by the fact that Tennyson wrote at the end of his life, whereas Scott was writing when still in his early thirties. The older poet seeks a sense of happy spiritual completion, and so he says "I hope"; Scott looks ahead to a life that will be informed by correct "motions of reality," and so talks about divinely-inspired courage and action.

Even with the use of the word "divine" and the transcendental assertion that "life is greater" than some people might think, "The Ideal" is a secularization of Tennyson's desire to be united with his God. It is characteristic of Scott's writing during the 1890's that he avoids expressions of spiritual yearning for certitude in favor of a code which will allow enlightened action. His major aim, at this relatively early time in his life, is to find the strength to still whatever inner questionings he might have felt, while conducting his life according to the idealistic vision of service described in his 1892 "sermon." To accomplish this end, Scott followed a tradition chosen by many Victorians and typified, according to H. N. Fairchild, by Matthew Arnold. This tradition, Fairchild says, was:

> friendly toward Christian culture and morality but rooted in classical wisdom rather than in Christian theology, subservient neither to positivistic nor to romantic hybris, drawing from the truth and high seriousness of great literature and great art evidences of man's ability to outstrip nature. This lofty tradition survives notably in Arnold.[8]

Scott found that the mixing of Christian and pagan elements of morality and philosophy yielded a practical code which improved upon both traditions. He used this code to inform plots in his creative writings and an artistically minor, but thematically important, example of this process occurs in the little-known story "Sister Ste Columbe."

Published in two parts in 1893, Scott's Mermaid Inn story, "Sister Ste Columbe," is a reverently Christian tale; the characters act, however, according to Scott's understanding of asceticism and classical Stoicism. The story begins with a description of an old fisherman named Pierre Moreau who has settled outside a village near a little marsh where he "had built his hut from slabs and untrimmed logs, and . . . lived utterly alone" (MI, p. 303). The details of the fisherman's situation seem inconsequential unless examined in light of what happens to him and to other characters. For Moreau, the isolated and crudely simple life is dangerous but also spiritually enlightening. When he falls sick in his cabin, his isolation makes his situation desperate, but as he grows weaker he experiences a vision which culminates in the actual appearance of Sister Ste Columbe. She rescues the old man and the first part of the narrative ends with Scott having interrelated elements of asceticism, mysticism and Christian piety within the fictional context. The second part of the story is an echo of the first, with a greater complexity of characterization and situation, and involves another old man, in the same town, but at a later time.

The second old man is like Moreau in that he is alone and poor, but he is a complete stranger to the town in which he is one day discovered on the ground, dying. A village boy named Tertulien befriends and nurses the stranger and is present when the old man cries out in a visionary trance, "There is no need for so much noise. Goodbye, we say, and we never come back" (MI, p. 310). Though Sister Ste Columbe arrives at the moment of his death, this second old man, like Pierre Moreau, discovers spiritual awareness or insight before the Church's representative can give aid. While the story by no means implies a rejection of traditional piety or of prayer, both old men are brought to the doorway of spiritual vision by the extremities of physical and emotional denial. Conscious spiritual questing, the kind Tennyson revealed in poems such as "Crossing the Bar," gives way to a restraining of desire which, ironically, brings spiritual satisfaction.

There is evidence in the story, in the form of allusions to historical figures, that Scott's admiration for ascetic restraint led him to see classical Stoicism as the ideal philosophy to blend with his traditional Christian beliefs. Two names in the Mermaid Inn fictional piece possess allusive importance, those of the nun Sister Ste Columbe, and the young boy Tertulien. With minor spelling variations, these are the names of people from early Christian history who represent the blending of religious and philosophical ideals Scott wished to articulate. Sister Ste Columbe, for example, is described as having "lived on the earth before," a statement which refers to her role as a spiritual representative, a "good angel of God," but which also draws attention to the historical precedents for her name. An early and little-known Christian woman saint who reportedly led a pious life working with poor villagers was Columba of Cordoba (d. 853). In its asceticism and orthodoxy, the life of this saint provides a consistent background for the character and actions of the woman in Scott's story. The name Columbe, however, also recalls two other saints, St. Columba (521-597) and Saint Columban (543-615), whose lives are examples of pious orthodoxy blended with secular and even pagan influences.[9]

Both men belonged to, and helped spread the organization of, monastic orders in their time and emphasized the importance of self-denial to the spiritual life; as well, though, both made important concessions to secular and pagan beliefs and practices to attain their missionary goals. Columba, from a wealthy and influential Irish clan, combined political and religious missions on his trips to Scotland. Saint Columban, or Columbanus, was a pioneer figure in Irish missionary work on the European continent and came into conflict with the Church over his fusion of pagan practices with traditional Christian observances. One of these debates, caused by his use of Celtic dating methods to establish Easter celebrations, resulted in his forcible removal from his monastery by a council of French bishops. Alone, the name Columbe, in its several possible significant references, does little more than reinforce the nun's emphasis on piety, asceticism and service to the poor common people in "Sister Ste Columbe." However, with the choice of the name Tertulien for a character Scott clearly indicates that he also sees the two Irish saints as significant figures representing the evolutionary nature of the Christian faith.

A Carthaginian who converted to Christianity, Tertullian (155-220) was familiar with the Latin and Greek classics, especially in the areas of philosophy, history and law. Like the Irish saints discussed above, he preached asceticism as a guide for daily living and warned against trends toward moral laxity. Also like them, his actions and teachings contained a not altogether orthodox view of Christianity. He was on the one hand a vocal and sometimes extreme defender of the Church against any pagan influences. He repeatedly warned, for instance, against the weakening of orthodox teaching, saying "away with all attempts to produce a Stoic, Platonic, and dialectical Christianity!"[10] He also was a man who voiced contradictions to this conservative line of thought, as several historians have noted. T. D. Barnes observes that Tertullian "explicitly rejected a Stoic, Platonic or dialectical Christianity. But in a wider sense, he had himself reconciled Christianity and classical culture."[11] Williston Walker's judgement is similar, as he notes that Tertullian's teachings were Christian, but relied "quite as much on Stoic teaching and legal conceptions."[12] The most prominent feature of Tertullian's thought is that he somehow was able to bring together ideas which even he assumed were irreconcilable.

What the lives of the Irish saints Columba and Columban and the Carthaginian Tertullian demonstrate in different ways is a desire to maintain a personal piety and orthodoxy while complementing traditional Christianity with elements of pagan belief and secular social structures. Tertullian, for example, advised Christians to keep their contacts with the State at a minimum, but he also believed the Church should strive to live peacefully with government. In choosing the name Tertulien, Scott draws attention to a pagan philosophy, Stoicism, which has had a continuing effect upon the growth of Christian morals and conduct, and which has particular significance for him as a bureaucrat and artist.

Stoicism, in its beginnings as a Hellenistic philosophy, is identified with Heraclitus who believed in eternal change, the use of reason, and the subordination of the individual will to the laws of nature. The development of Stoic belief after Heraclitus was essentially a variation of emphasis upon these original concepts and saw its last major statements delivered through the writings of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180).[13] His Meditations, an anecdotal collection of thoughts, emphasizes the interpretation of life through conduct:

> Number 23: As thou thyself art a component part of a social system, so let every act of thine be a component part of social life. Whatever act of thine then has no reference, either immediately or remotely, to a social end, this tears asunder thy life, and does not allow it to be one, and it is of the nature of a mutiny, just as when in a popular assembly a man acting by himself stands apart from the general agreement.[14]

Marcus Aurelius taught self-control and useful citizenship in the cosmopolis that he called the universe, and because he believed that an emphasis upon the needs of the Self contradicted an ideal harmony, he practiced a personal austerity in dress, emotions and possessions. A contemporary of Tertullian, Marcus Aurelius provides a literary example of the ideals of Stoicism at the time.

In Scott's story the name and character of Tertulien serve to draw together the Stoic and Christian attitudes regarding asceticism, spiritual awareness, and death. Scott introduces Tertulien as a boy who might "grow up naughty," who is as yet unaware of his spiritual and moral potential. The first of his two moving spiritual experiences occurs by the bedside of the dying stranger who calls out in his sleep:

> Tertulien was afraid to move; he was fascinated by the gleam through the half-shut lids. 'There is no need for so much noise. Goodbye, we say, and we never come back.' Then the eyes shut and the man slept. (MI, p. 310)

The calm acceptance of death is a Stoical ideal which Scott used to inform other works such as the poem "The Forsaken," and the story "Charcoal," where an Indian dies with "the calm of a stoic."[15] The words of the stranger in "Sister Ste Columbe" are almost a paraphrase of classical statements on the subject, such as this one by Marcus Aurelius:

> What a soul that is which is ready, if at any moment it must be separated from the body, and ready either to be extinguished or dispersed or continue to exist; but so that this readiness comes from a man's own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians, but considerately and with dignity and in a way to persuade another, without tragic show.[16]

From an historical standpoint which is aware of the influence Stoicism has had on Christianity, the remark about Christians is humorous, but Marcus Aurelius' definition of a dignified death underlines two important points: first, the dying person finds an inner peace in a situation which could be terrifying and, second, witnesses to the event are themselves led to emulate this conduct. Both advantages are illustrated in Scott's story.

The second of the boy's spiritual experiences follows the old man's visionary speech and occurs when Sister Ste Columbe enters the sickroom. Her presence is necessary to complete the story's basic Christian framework, as she is several times called "in very truth a good angel of God," but she is as much a recipient of spiritual comfort as is the old man. Tertulien is the awed witness to this reciprocity:

> She saw Madame Dorion holding up the [man's] half-dead face. She tottered and sank down, holding her hands to her side. One sharp pang seemed to cross her face, her lips moved. Tertulien, who was lingering at the door, heard some half-articulated name, and the look of pain was transfigured to a smile of ineffable peace. (_MI_, p. 311)

The death scene culminates the growth of spiritual awareness which implicitly has taken place in Tertulien. Growing up in an orthodox Christian environment, Tertulien has had his awareness intensified by the ascetic restraint and stoic calm of the stranger's dying moments. As well, Tertulien has observed the powerful effect the death has had upon the representative of the Church, an effect which does not lessen, but adds to, Sister Ste Columbe's role as a comforter of the suffering. Ideally, all who know of the event, including the reader, have benefited from this model death and have learned indirectly how the ideals of Stoic asceticism may strengthen a Christian life.

Intellectual idealism informs the themes and events of "Sister Ste Columbe," a vision governed by a desire to balance intellectual optimism with an emotional acceptance of life's realities. However, Scott is not always capable of summoning a Stoical dignity in these early years: a darker side of Scott occasionally emerges in works which venture beyond Christianity and Stoicism to articulate a bleak interpretation of life. In one poem, "The Cup" (1898), he depicts man living deterministically in an unconscious universe:

Pain and pleasure is one sword
Hacking out your destiny;
Do not say, "It is not just."
That word won't apply to life. . . . (Poems, p. 234)

Defeat and bitter resignation inform these lines. The emphasis is not on how man will conduct his death, but on how death will release him:

Tilt the goblet, cease the strife.
Here at last is something good,
Just to warm your flagging blood.
Don't take breath--
At the bottom of the cup
Here is death:
Drink it up. (Poems, p. 234)

Although the outlook expressed in "The Cup"is not one most readers would readily associate with Scott, the poem cannot be considered unique in the body of his writing and is evidence that his thinking underwent an early period of adjustment. "The Happy Fatalist," also published in 1898, uses different imagery but reveals an attitude very similar to the one maintained in "The Cup."

A significant number of poems, including "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris," use the seed as a central image of hope and rebirth, but in "The Happy Fatalist" Scott undercuts the seed image with an ironic interpretation of an extended harvest metaphor:

> We plough the field,
> And harrow the clod,
> And hurl the seed.
> Trust for trust:
> The germ yields,
> The wheat brairds,
> We gather the sheaf
> Deed for deed. . . . (Poems, p. 231)

The cyclical pattern of life and death, seen in the growth of seeds to plants that end as moldering chaff, is familiar enough to a reader of Scott's work, but the informing pattern ends in the natural cycle and has little intimation of a transcendent significance. If any intelligence informs the actions taking place, it is in the form of a primitive pagan god:

> The man is worn,
> His days are bound,
> But his labour returns,
> The child learns
> Round for round:
> The god is astir,
> Firm and free,
> Weaving his plan,
> Swelling the tree,
> Bracing the man. . . . (Poems, p. 231)

What distinguishes this poem from Scott's other, better-known, works is an aloof narrative stance which lacks a clear indication of a governing moral sense. As in "The Cup," there is no message that life is just, no signs to prompt the reader to judge that life is good or bad:

> Cry life is joy,
> Cry life is woe,
> The god is content,
> Impartial in power,
> Tranquil--and lo!
> Like the kernels in quern,
> Each in turn,
> Comes to his hour,
> Not fast nor slow:
> It is well: even so. (Poems, pp. 231-32)

The image of man as a kernel in a grinding mill is devoid of any message of salvation or larger purpose; the poem's final comment turns away from a unifying vision to grasp a resigned observation that the world works as it does, in mechanistic fashion. The material world functions as it must, and man is subject to the machinations of forces that assemble and disassemble the elements.

Given the fact that the publication of the poems came soon after Scott's involvement in the Mermaid Inn series, it is reasonable to assume that the attitudes evidenced by "The Cup" and "The Happy Fatalist" were influenced in part by Thomas Hardy. Scott's reading in 1892 included Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and his review for the Globe stated that the author "has nowhere equalled the tragic pathos of this story, which is yet so true to the conditions of life" (MI, p. 46). Scott's admiration for Hardy is genuine, as he says that the events of the novel "fall naturally and inevitably," but he could not sustain the outright pessimism and resignation which produced "The Cup" and "The Happy Fatalist." His religious and philosophical idealism urged him to portray examples of right conduct, to refine the blend of Christianity and Stoicism found in "Sister Ste Columbe." To this end, he wrote poems such as "The Forsaken."

In "The Forsaken" (1905), Scott demonstrates through the character of a Chippewa Indian woman an ideal of human conduct governed by effort, love and the peaceful acceptance of life's processes. The first of two parts in the poem relates an incident from the woman's earlier life when, isolated in the winter wilderness, she makes determined sacrifices to save her baby and herself. The portrait Scott creates in Part I is one of courage and effort, but especially of love, as she presses on "Sure of her goal/ And the life of her dear one." Part II depicts the woman in old age, as she is about to be abandoned by her tribe because "she was old and useless,/ Like a paddle broken and warped,/ Or a pole that was splintered."

Because the poem depicts the historical transition of tribal values, as well as the changing experiences of an individual, readers of "The Forsaken" have argued about Scott's tone with regard to the tribe as they leave the woman to die:

> There one night they camped, and on the morrow
> Gathered their kettles and birch-bark
> Their rabbit-skin robes and their mink-traps,
> Launched their canoes and slunk away through the islands,
> Left her alone forever,
> Without a word of farewell. . . . (Poems, p. 30)

The word "slunk" poses a problem in interpretation: does Scott want the reader to interpret the Indian action as being compassionless and guilt-ridden? If so, the poet must have written the poem to expose the emotional shallowness of a people. Lee Meckler argues convincingly that Scott intended just the opposite in this passage, saying that the Indians are victims of an imperfect mixing of cultural values.[17] This interpretation is supported by the fact that in Part I of the poem only Indian articles or Indian names for articles are used, while in Part II the Indians possess a mixture of traditional and white goods and, presumably, a similar mixture of attitudes. The transition has not been healthy because some traditional practices, such as the abandonment of the old, are maintained but the conviction behind these practices has been shaken.

The troubled uncertainty of the tribe provides a contrast to the serene acceptance of the old woman who has been "forsaken" only in the guilty minds of her people. While her tribe departs in confusion, the old woman prepares for her death in a way which carries her beyond the limits of specific social context:

> Then, without a sigh,
> Valiant, unshaken,
> She smoothed her dark locks under her kerchief,
> Composed her shawl in state, . . . (Poems, p. 30)

She is a model of rational calm and acceptance, transcending her Indian self to become a universal example. Death, Scott is saying, is to be met with her courage, "without pain, or dread, or even a moment of longing" because the process is not only inevitable, but good.

Stoical acceptance and Christian piety meet happily in the closing scene. As the Chippewa woman dies, nature appears to consecrate her passing with a shroud of snow crystals, leaving only darkness and silence:

> But in the frost of the dawn,
> Up from the life below,
> Rose a column of breath
> Through a tiny cleft in the snow,

Fragile, delicately drawn,
Wavering with its own weakness,
In the wilderness a sign of the spirit,
Persisting still in the sight of the sun
Till day was done.
Then all light was gathered up by the hand of God
    and hid in His breast,
Then there was born a silence deeper than silence,
Then she had rest. (Poems, p. 31)

Ironically, the survivors suffer in "The Forsaken," while the forsaken one finds peace and spiritual transcendence. In keeping with his belief in "The Ideal" that those who lead lives of enlightened conduct do not fret over their mundane existence, Scott shows the Chippewa woman aloof from care. In another poem from the same period in his life, "On the Way to the Mission" (1905), Scott uses the Stoical ideal to inform a narrative which closely resembles traditional stories about early Christian martyrdom.

"On the Way to the Mission" tells the story of an Indian trapper who is taking the body of his wife to a mission for a Christian burial. Along the way, he is ambushed by two whitemen, "servants of greed," who kill him because they believe his toboggan is loaded with valuable furs. Again, as in "The Forsaken," the survivors suffer more than does their victim. When the whites kill the Indian they rush to take their plunder:

Then the servants of greed
Tore off the cover to count their gain;
They shuddered away into the shadows
Hearing each the loud heart of the other. (Poems, p. 26)

The killers are motivated only by greed; whatever moral sense they possess is awakened, ironically, not by the fact that they have done wrong, but by their discovery that their criminal act has been mistakenly absurd.

As a moral tale, the poem in part reflects Scott's fear of unchecked white aggression towards the Indian. But this social commentary itself is subordinated to the larger moral and philosophical message of the poem, which offers an example of spiritually-informed conduct. The Indian trapper is like the Chippewa woman in "The Forsaken" in that he too sees his death approaching and calmly accepts his fate:

> The Indian's face was calm.
> He strode with the sorrow of fore-knowledge,
> But his eyes were jewels of content
> Set in circles of peace. (Poems, p. 25)

Deterministic as these lines might seem, Scott is not so concerned with the idea that events are already fixed in the future as he is with the conduct and outlook which greets these events. Nor is the world in which these incidents take place without an intimation of a consoling "spirit," a "something" which by its presence almost interrupts the fatal development of action. In a later poem, "The Height of Land," this spirit or vague something is more extensively examined as a mystical transcendent force of divine nature, but in this poem Scott only briefly introduces the spirit and allows it to disappear when the trapper is killed. Christian references are unmistakably present in the poem in the form of this spirit and the Indian's goal, the mission, but the final impressions of strength, peace and acceptance arise from the trapper's representative conduct, his manner of dying.

As a subject, death appears frequently in Scott's writing. It became for him, as for many other Christian writers before him such as Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), the ultimate test of the efficacy of a code of conduct. Montaigne, whom Scott had been reading or re-reading in 1893 (MI, p. 232), had identified a dignified death as the distinguishing characteristic of a good life:

> Now among the principal benefits of virtue is disdain for death, a means that furnishes our life with a soft tranquillity and gives us a pure and pleasant enjoyment of it, without which all other pleasures are extinguished. That is why all rules meet and agree at this point.[18]

Montaigne's comments appear in an essay titled "That to philosophize is to learn to die," an earlier work (1572-74) which nevertheless states a concern which was to occupy his thoughts throughout his life: how to gain a rational and disciplined acceptance of one's mortality. The French philosopher's search for a vision of strength, coupled with his skeptical attitudes towards traditions of thought, often resulted in ambiguous blendings of Christian and pagan outlooks. As Donald Treadgold has noted in A History of Christianity, the truth was that "though Montaigne over and over professed his Catholic faith and his submission to the Church, he was more a Stoic than a Christian in thought."[19] Scott's direct praise of Montaigne in the Mermaid Inn essay, and his respectful reference to the philosopher in the story "Paul Farlotte," show that he saw him belonging to the same tradition as men such as Tertullian. Their significant contribution in history had been to an evolutionary kind of Christianity which benefited from the infusion of ideas from many sources, especially classical Stoicism.

In his allusions to Christianity and Stoicism, and to their representatives, Scott does not always make clear how he sees these two lines of thought relating to one another. His lack of clarity may reflect a personal failing, but some of it is characteristic of the tradition he chose to identify himself with, as historians have said with regard to Tertullian and Montaigne. As prominent Christian thinkers, in fact, these men reveal an approach present in Christianity since its earlier times. Says Treadgold: "Competing religious and philosophical ideas preceded and existed side by side with Christianity. One of these was Stoicism."[20] Early Christian groups, he adds, "drew on Stoic ideas, current throughout the [Roman] Empire, about the order of nature and monotheism. . . ."[21] And certain natural affinities between the two ways of thought contributed to the continuing and permanent impress of Stoicism upon Christianity, according to Williston Walker:

> The strenuous ascetic attitude of Stoicism, its doctrine of the all-pervading and all-ruling divine wisdom, Logos, its insistence that all who do well are equally deserving, whatever their station, and its assertion of the essential brotherhood of all men, were profoundly to affect Christian theology.[22]

The possibility always existed that a Christian might find the appeal of Stoicism stronger than that of the religious faith, as Treadgold claims happened with Montaigne. Scott, too, often emphasizes the Stoical attitude over the Christian, and his personal search for an aesthetic which would order his use of tragic situations in his writings provides one explanation for this emphasis.

By 1922, Scott had found that, alone, neither the deterministic resignation of "The Happy Fatalist" nor the uplifting version of Christianity could prove satisfactory for him. In his speech to the Royal Society, he said:

> Tennyson's thought "of one far off divine event to which the whole creation moves" is not only inadequate to express what a poet of the present day feels about the destiny of man and about the universe; it fails in appeal, it is merely uninteresting to him; and no modern poet would say as Matthew Arnold said: "Weary of myself, and sick of asking what I am and what I ought to be." (DCS, pp. 15-16)

Scott saw the tragic mode as an accurate depiction of life, but Tennyson and Arnold stopped short of the kind of intellectual and spiritual searching that could be accommodated within a philosophy of acceptance. It was this balancing of desires which Arnold himself had once praised in an essay on the life of the Stoic, Marcus Aurelius: "We see him [the emperor] wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless, yet with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond. . . ."[23] Scott never rejected his Victorian predecessors, but he stated a preference for the thinkers of another age: "Tennyson and Arnold are comparatively recent leaders of thought and we are more akin to the Elizabethans with their spirit of quest than we are to Wordsworth and Arnold" (DCS, p. 16). His praise for the Elizabethans, and especially for Shakespeare, is as frequent in "Poetry and Progress" as for the Greek and Roman classical writers, not only because the quality of their art is high, but because their outlook achieves the combination of questing and acceptance that he strove to portray in his tragic narratives. T. S. Eliot has also identified this quality in Elizabethan art, and called it Stoicism, but with a reaction that is different from Scott's. In the essay "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," Eliot maintains that Seneca was the literary representative of Roman Stoicism and that "Roman stoicism is an important ingredient in Elizabethan drama." He is convinced that this ingredient was detrimental to Elizabethan thought:

> It was natural that in a time like that of Elizabeth stoicism should appear. The original stoicism, and especially the Roman stoicism, was of course a philosophy suited to slaves; hence its absorption into early Christianity. . . . A man does not join himself with the Universe so long as he has anything else to join himself with; men who could take part in the life of a thriving Greek city-state had something better to join themselves to; and Christians have had something better. Stoicism is the refuge for the individual in an indifferent or hostile world too big for him; it is the permanent substratum

> of a number of versions of cheering oneself up. Nietzsche is the most conspicuous modern instance of cheering oneself up. The stoical attitude is the reverse of Christian humility.[24]

Eliot's critique of the Elizabethan period asserts that the time was one of exaggerated individualism, an outlook he thinks was made possible because stoicism emphasizes a strength of the Self. On this point Scott, who also saw individualism as a moral and social failing, seems to have understood the character of Stoicism better than Eliot. Scott's examples of model Stoical conduct, seen in works such as "The Forsaken" and "Paul Farlotte," suppress individual desires to achieve a peaceful reconciliation with the world. Eliot was, however, correct in seeing that the influence of Stoicism offered a "reverse" of a humility that was specifically Christian: ultimately, the Christian must subordinate the Self to a figure of dogmatic, historical importance: Jesus Christ. Those who, like Scott, found Stoicism a powerful system of ideas and conduct could discover that they were embracing a Christianity without Christ, because they valued a transcendence that was not limited to dogmas concerning specific religions and historical figures. Scott did not so much reject Jesus the historical, religious figure as he overshadowed Him with a transcendent ideal called Love.

The Victorian elevation of Love to a social and intellectual ideal has been discussed frequently by critics such as Walter Houghton, who says

> In an age of transition in which crucial problems, both practical and theoretical, exercised the thinking mind at the expense of the sensibility and in which baffled thought so often issued in a feeling of impotence and a mood of despair, the thinker could find in love a resolution of psychological tensions, and a religion naturalistic or Platonic, to take the place of Christianity.[25]

The ambivalence of Scott's religious thinking is perhaps nowhere clearer than with regard to his ideas on Love, which he states is both the highest concept of human thought and emotion, and a fallible, even treacherous, way of perception and experience. There are basically two, related, kinds of love in Scott's work: human, emotional love and divine, spiritual love which exists between man and God.

Human love may be depicted in Scott's work as occurring between a parent and child or between adult lovers, but these forms usually suggest a higher version of love, as is the case in the Dedication to his wife Elise in The Green Cloister:

> The fluttering charm, the pliant grace,
> The fragile form and spirit face
> Are instinct with essential bliss,
> Supported in its trembling line,
> As melody in music is,
> By a harmony divine:
> Enough of Love the absolute
> To give her heart the perfect fruit
> Of love; enough of Wisdom's power
> To give her mind an earthly strength;
> Enough of Beauty's secret dower
> Of lovely thought, to give her soul
> The fragrance of a flower.[26]

Human attributes owe their expression to the informing power of absolutes, such as Wisdom and Beauty, and the greatest of these is Love. It is called "the" absolute, it leads the other qualities in order of lines and, most significantly, Love is named in the seventh, or central, line of the poem. Love is at the heart of the poem, just as it resides in the human heart and at the heart of the universe. In his portrayals of the quality, Scott often uses children as intermediary figures between human and divine love, as is seen in the story "Sister Ste Columbe," and the poem "The Lesson."

The child Tertulien is an important link between the two forms of love in Scott's story. He is the only one to establish a personal relationship with the dying stranger and is the last object of the man's affection. Only minutes before the old man's death, the boy makes his final visit:

> Tertulien had just come in and was standing close to him. He reached out his hand suddenly and caught the little boy by the arm and drew him close. Then he kissed him once firmly and let him go. Tertulien did not move; he threw his arms about the man's neck and gave him a child's kiss, full on the lips. (*MI*, p. 310)

The love between man and child in this scene is guileless and spontaneous, and echoes the love that ideally exists between man and God. It is Tertulien, again, who summons the representative of God's love, Sister Ste Columbe, and it is he who shares, from a privileged vantage point in the sick room, the moment of the nun's transfiguration. Tertulien is an exemplary figure, showing the relationship between earthly and divine love, in the same way that the child in "The Lesson" (1898) allows the poet to see the nature of God's love for man.

In "The Lesson," Scott follows the tradition, established by Victorian writers such as Coventry Patmore, which saw spirituality and emotional intensity blended in a domestic scene. In the child's room, a father bends over his sleeping daughter:

> When her dear breathing steadies after sighs,
> And the soft lids have clouded the blue eyes,
> A tiny hand falls on my cheek--
> Lightly and so fragrantly
> As if a snow-flake could a rose-leaf be--
> And in the dark touches a tear
> Which has sprung clear,
> From eyes unconscious of their own distress,
> At the deep pathos of such tender helplessness.
> And then she claims her sleep,
> As if she knows my love and trusts it deep. (*Poems*, p. 178)

Scott's portraits of love involving children are free of the deception and misunderstanding common to his scenes of adult love. The poem "Spring on Mattagami," for example, creates a fantasy of ideal adult love only to qualify it as being vain and "deep with all derision." Love between parents and their children is an ideal realized in life, and Scott depicts this love in "The Lesson" as a commentary upon the nature of Man's relationship to his God:

> Dear God! to whom the bravest of us is a child,
> When I am weary, when I cannot rest,
> I have stretched out my hand into the dark,
> And felt the shadow stark,
> But no face brooding near,
> Nor any tear
> Compassionately wept:
> I have not slept. (Poems, p. 179)

Scott expresses the spiritual uneasiness of his time, using an analogy that Tennyson had employed in "In Memoriam":

> If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
> I heard a voice, "believe no more,"
> And heard an ever-breaking shore
> That tumbled in the Godless deep. . . .
> . . . .
> No, like a child in doubt and fear:
> But that blind clamor made me wise;
> Then was I as a child that cries,
> But, crying, knows his father near. . . .[27]

The emphasis Scott places on his experience is not one which evidences the clear knowledge of the existence of the divinity, but one which teaches an acceptance within earthly bounds:

> But now I learn my lesson from the sage,
> Who burns his lore with acid on the heart;
> I will not whimper when I feel the smart,
> And for my comfort will look down, not up;
> I will give ever from a brimming sky,
> Not telling how or why;
> I will be answered in this little child,
> I will be reconciled. (Poems, p. 179)

Impossible through supernatural revelation or by looking "up," the knowledge of divinity and the strength of Scott's faith is based upon seeing human love as a form of universal Love. As James Benziger has pointed out, this search for a relationship between the human and the divine is well-represented in English literature:

> The crucial question for Wordsworth and Tennyson, and perhaps for Shelley and the others also, was not whether there is an ultimate Power but whether this Power is one to which man can be related by love.[28]

In Scott's view of this relationship, the word "reconciled" suggests a particular kind of Christian interpretation and demands comparison to Biblical concepts of reconciliation.

In Romans, Paul writes that he and his former enemies have been

> reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life. Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.[29]

This notion of reconciliation is repeated in the New Testament (for example, in Corinthians II 5:10 and Colossians 1:20), but always as firmly rooted in the theological necessity of the Crucifixion. Scott, by omitting entirely from his works direct reference to this most basic article of orthodoxy, seeks to retain the idea of reconciliation without making it dependent upon the literal intermediary figure of Jesus.

Scott rarely writes directly about Jesus Christ but when he does, as is the case in "The Wise Men from the East," he avoids the subjects of divinity and salvation. Instead, he portrays the child Jesus as a figure exemplary of the ideal called Love. The poem "The Wise Men from the East" (1935) has all the appearance of a fairly orthodox treatment of the Nativity legend of Jesus's birth. The subject of the poem and its use of the basic narrative of the legend might even lead the reader to conclude that it is one of Scott's "patent pieces of religious verse."[30] The first stanza is faithful to the Gospel rendition of the nativity in detail and tone, telling of the wise men and their visit to the newborn Jesus. In the second and third stanzas Scott adds a distinctive interpretation to the basic legend by having the baby react negatively to the gifts brought to him. By the fourth stanza and His introduction to the last of the wise men, Jesus' behavior is emotionally intense:

> The third was haughty Melchoir,
> Dark with the spoil of mart and war,
>   He bore the crusted gold;
> Christ Jesus gave a cry of pain,
> And looked not on them once again
>   But nestled in His fold. (GC, p. 83)

The Gospel rendition of the nativity casts the three wise men into unwitting roles, first as spies for King Herod, then as symbolic heralds announcing the holiness of the baby. In Scott's version, the gifts are not tokens worthy of the celebration of the event, but a moral effrontery, and the wise men are foils to illuminate the poet's desire to move away from the strictly orthodox version of the legend.

The concluding stanza contains an important insight into Scott's attitude towards Christianity. The poet's voice is distanced from the action of the narrative and observes:

> For they had brought Him treasure-trove,
> But had not any little love
>   For one they thought a King:
> Christ Jesus gave to Mary then
> His first mild message unto men,
>   Love is the precious thing. (GC, p. 84)

Jesus in this poem is less a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy than He is one of Scott's child-figures who demonstrate the evolving nature of faith. An examination of Scott's writing reveals many allusions to different aspects of the body of Gospel literature, but none to the incident or idea of salvation through the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Fairchild describes a trend in this regard to which Scott's work offers some significant exceptions:

> Many poets of the 1880-1920 period make very free with the name of God but seldom mean anything in particular when they do so. Most of them continue to coast on the steadily dwindling ethical impetus of the religion in which they no longer believe. Symbols, legends, and personalities of the Christian tradition are freely drawn upon, for the desire to obtain some illusion of integration by means of a "usable myth" is already strong; and when one no longer needs to think of Christianity as objectively true or false one is free to play with it aesthetically.[31]

The aesthetic "play" Fairchild identifies is evident to some extent in Scott's attempt to arrive at a usable definition of Love. The Love he depicts owes much to his Christian heritage, but to this basic outlook he adds the imagery of pagan myth, and the results are not consistent throughout his writings. However, Scott usually is motivated by a hope or desire to believe, and it is this motivation which helps separate his work from the aesthetic play Fairchild describes.

The blurring of the boundaries between Christianity and paganism was certainly nothing new to Scott's age and occurred often in even the earliest of Christian times during, for example, the reigns of emperors Julian and Constantine.[32] In several poems, Scott uses the star Venus to symbolize the ideal concept of Love, adding elements of emotional intensity and even eroticism to the intellectual abstraction. However, in two poems, "Spring on Mattagami," and "At Gull Lake: August 1810," the star image reveals an unresolved tension between Love as a subjective, purely human experience and Love as a means to connecting with the divine. In these poems, Scott seriously questions the same assumption he makes in poems such as "The Lesson," that Love is absolute and linked to the divine.

Scott's purpose in "Spring on Mattagami" (written in 1906 and published in 1916) was to illustrate a stoical acceptance of the mutability of all things, even of the supposed absolute Love. The larger part of the poem is concerned with setting up, and rejecting, an idealistic vision of romantic love. While on a wilderness trip, the narrator remembers a lost love and thinks things might have gone better if the affair had not taken place in Europe:

> If she could be here where all the world is eager
> For dear love with the primal Eden sway
> Where the blood is fire and no pulse is thin or meagre,
> All the heart of all the world beats one way! (Poems, p. 43)

If the lady had been with him in the strong and free reaches of the forest away from social convention, the poet is saying, then he is sure their love would have flourished:

> She would gather close and shudder and swoon away,
> She would be mine for ever and for ever,
> Mine for all time and beyond the judgment day. (Poems, p. 45)

The poet finally realizes this attitude is vain and only a dream, though he takes some comfort in the idyllic vision. Nothing, except perhaps the process of change, is "for all time," and even Love the absolute, symbolized by Venus, must see its influence diminished:

> Venus sinks first lost in ruby splendour
> Stars like wood-daffodils grow golden in the night,
> Far, far above, in a space entranced and tender,
> Floats the growing moon pale with virgin light. (Poems, p. 45)

Venus is usually seen in Scott's work as a final symbolic statement to the light of day and to the ideal conduct of men's affairs. Conversely, the moon rises over the aftermath of evil or violence and signals a peaceful death for those who have suffered a painful existence. All that the poet is sure of and holds to in his stoical acceptance is the inevitability of change in men's lives and the feeling that there is something greater than mundane existence:

> Vaster than the world or life or death my trust is
>   Based in the unseen and towering far above;
> Hold me, O Law, that deeper lies than Justice,
>   Guide me, O Light, that stronger burns than Love.
> (Poems, p. 45)

The ordering of abstractions in the last two lines is interesting: the poet subordinates Love, which has been shown to be a fallible desire of subjectivity, to a higher and unattainable apprehension of truth called Light (and, by association, Law). Self-ironic and seemingly wise, the poet in "Spring on Mattagami" exposes the dangers of solipsistic thinking; in "At Gull Lake: August 1810," Scott offers a narrative which shows that a stoical acceptance of the "Law" and "Light" that govern the world allows one to live with the defeat of Love and Justice.

It cannot be denied that one of the themes in "At Gull Lake: August 1810" (1935) is the suffering of individuals caught in the pull of opposing cultural forces. Keejigo, the Indian woman, is herself a person of mixed blood and her tragedy of love and jealousy is a dramatic working out of the kinds of conflicting passions Scott depicts in poems such as "The Half-Breed Girl." Like that girl, Keejigo is

> Troubled by fugitive visions
> In the smoke of the camp-fires,
> In the close dark of the teepee. . . .
> . . . .
> Dreams of sounds unheard--
> The echoes of echo. . . . (GC, p. 55)

The theme of opposing racial and cultural forces is primarily useful, however, for providing the general background of narrative development; the central thematic concern of the poem deals with the universals of love, death, and the permanence of change, and hinges upon the symbolic importance of two figures, the morning-star and the moon.

In the opening eleven lines, Scott offers what appears to be a description of setting, but the first section is also a summary of the vision which governs the poem as a whole. The first line uses the verb "set" to establish the time as being in the present, but in the next line the present scene is linked to the past:

> Gull Lake set in the rolling prairie--
> Still there are reeds on the shore,
> As of old the poplars shimmer
> As summer passes. . . . (GC, p. 54)

Though Scott is about to describe a specific incident, one that is remarkable for its intensity of emotion and brutality of action, he also wishes to impress upon the reader that the character of the universe has not been altered by what occurred long ago: "All proceeds in the flow of Time/ As a hundred years ago." Eternal stasis paradoxically contains eternal change, as is evidenced by the constant exchange of positions in the sky by the morning star and the moon: "night comes with moon-glimmer/ Dawn with the morning star. . . ." By mixing the immediate particularity of trees and grasses with the abstract notion of the flow of Time, Scott prepares the reader to accept a particular incident as having universal ramifications.

Keejigo, wife of Tabashaw, is the only character in the poem who is assigned a specific symbolic role; Tabashaw and Nairne the trader are limited to dramatic roles which merely ensure the development of the narrative. Her identification is clear: "Star she was named for Keejigo, star of the morning," and like the star, she is an embodiment of the aspects of love:

> Now she had found her hero,
> And offered her body and spirit
> With abject unreasoning passion,
> As Earth abandons herself
> To the sun and the thrust of the lightning. (GC, p. 55)

The image is erotic and shows two potential sides of love: the side that is selfless and sacrificing and the side that is obsessive in its need to be satisfied. The effects of this powerful emotion upon its bearer are great in both beauty and suffering and Keejigo's song in three stanzas covers this range. The first stanza opens with an analogy:

> The flower lives on the prairie,
> The wind in the sky,
> I am here my beloved;
> The wind and the flower. (GC, p. 56)

Offering herself up to her lover is, to her, as natural an act as the unconscious movement of nature's beings, and the parallel to the idealized lover's attitude in "Spring on Mattagami" is easily seen. Keejigo's capitulation to her lover is dangerous and, in the next stanza, her song appropriately switches to metaphors of the hunt and captivity:

> The crane hides in the sand-hills,
> Where does the wolverine hide?
> I am here my beloved,
> Heart's blood on the feathers
> The foot caught in the trap. (GC, p. 56)

The images of blood and violent entrapment foreshadow the events to follow. Love unanswered punishes the lover and in the third stanza Keejigo pleads for release and healing.

Though Keejigo's death is terrible and her sacrifice in the name of love seems to be extreme, Scott does not intend her case to be read as exceptional or only as a moral lesson concerning the dangers of deep emotion. Certainly her love is abject and unreasoning, but the fate of all love is equally hard: death and the passage of time erase all vestiges of life and love, and Keejigo's lesson in this truth is only more swift and complete than for the rest of us.

In a scene that is similar to the conclusion of "Powassan's Drum," the anger and hatred of Keejigo's tormentors awaken a fury of response in the landscape:

> Then burst the storm--
> The Indians' screams and the howls of the dogs
> Lost in the crash of hail
> That smashed the sedges and reeds,
> Stripped the poplars of leaves,
> Tore and blazed onwards,
> Wasting itself with riot and tumult--
> Supreme in the beauty of terror. (GC, p. 57)

When Scott uses the phrase "the beauty of terror" he is not speaking of titillation, the excitement aroused by violence and extreme contrast. Rather, he is admitting the necessity of seeing the world as a place of contraries and ranges of possibility. This was not an outlook Scott had always held. In September of 1892, writing in the Mermaid Inn column, he says,

> There is no value to the poetic temperament in knowing the obscure and vicious side of life; it can hardly make a man's work of greater value to write knowingly about vagrant and wayward things. (MI, p. 148)

By 1922, when he addresses the Royal Society, he adopts a more liberal aesthetic view:

> There is even a negative use in ugliness that throws into relief upon a dark and inchoate background the shining lines and melting curves of true beauty. (DCS, p. 23)

The later remarks are consistent with that side of Scott which entertained a growing skepticism with regard to what he called "our preferences" and "our accepted dogmas," not only with matters aesthetic, but philosophical. The poem set at Gull Lake makes vague assertions about beauty as an ideal but generally avoids the subject of absolutes. If a general moral outlook is advised it is the familiar one of acceptance or, as described by Montaigne, the ability to assimilate a range of possibilities in life:

> We must learn to endure what we cannot avoid. Our life is composed, like the harmony of the world, of contrary things, also of different tones, sweet and harsh, sharp and flat, soft and loud. If a musician liked only one kind, what would he have to say? He must know how to use them together and blend them. And so must we do with good and evil, which are consubstantial with our life. Our existence is impossible without this mixture, and one element is no less necessary for it than the other. To try to kick against natural necessity is to imitate the folly of Ctesiphon, who undertook a kicking match with his mule.[33]

Love and Justice do not exist alone and absolute in the world, and Keejigo's story is the narrative proof of this belief: it is the dramatic rendering of the theoretical summation offered in "Spring on Mattagami."

Keejigo has gained a peaceful acceptance as she faces her enemies, not unlike that of the Chippewa woman in "The Forsaken." Scott tells how she "held her face to the fury/ And made no sound," as she was being burned by a firebrand, and surely he wishes the reader to adopt a similar stance with regard to the events depicted. The conclusion of the poem is not, therefore, a lament but a disciplined acceptance. As the sun sets it creates a stunning vision of beauty, a rainbow, which is as emphemeral as the beauty of Keejigo has proven to be. As the storm retreats, the scene transforms:

> The wind withdrew the veil from the shrine of the moon,
> She rose changing her dusky shade for the glow
> Of the prairie lily, till free of all blemish of colour
> She came to her zenith without a cloud or a star,
> A lovely perfection, snow-pure in the heaven of midnight.
> After the beauty of terror the beauty of peace. (GC, p. 58)

Venus, the star of life and love, fades in the sky, to be replaced by the moon in lonely eminence. Keejigo's final departure, like that of the evening star, is accepted quietly:

> But Keejigo came no more to the camps of her people:
> Only the midnight moon knew where she felt her way,
> Only the leaves of autumn, the snows of winter
> Knew where she lay. (GC, p. 58)

After the defeat of Love and Justice come the eternalities of Law and Light. The influence of Stoicism upon Scott's thinking is evident in "Gull Lake" and other works which teach the relinquishment of personal desire and the acceptance of larger truths or eternalities.

Scott holds two evidently contradictory opinions about the power of Love in his work. The first, represented by poems such as "The Lesson," and the Dedication to The Green Cloister, covers many years in the poet's writing career and sees Love as an absolute which has the power to unite mundane and divine levels of experience. The second, revealed in works such as "Spring on Mattagami," and "At Gull Lake: August 1810," also spans many years of work and clearly qualifies the notion of Love as a transcendent, motive force. A possible explanation for this balancing of attitudes is in a character trait which I discuss at greater length in Chapter V: Scott's emotional desires are at odds with his intellectual desires. He experiences an intense personal desire to believe that Love is an absolute, that it is the highest expression of human emotion and spirituality. At the same time, his intellectual desire is to see that Love as an absolute is nothing more than an individual and cultural projection of humanistic ideals, a solipsism reflecting the prejudices and dogmas of a society governed by Christian values. I believe this explanation has validity, but must be considered in conjunction with another, related, possibility: that Scott consciously balanced these two attitudes because he believed, above all other considerations of ideals and absolutes, that evolutionary change made possible the reverence of traditions alongside the acceptance of new ideas. Thus, he could at the same moment hail Love as the highest ideal to be articulated in the history of human values, and acknowledge that this ideal was about to be superseded by other ideals. As an informing principle, the belief in an evolutionary theory of history had a great effect upon Scott's writing.

In his assessment of Tennyson's work, Scott had praised that poet's ability to find acceptance in faith while looking to greater or larger kinds of faith. Other Victorian intellectuals such as Matthew Arnold held similar views about faith, and we know that though Scott was uncomfortable with Arnold's didacticism, he admired the man's opinions because they revealed a "mind stored full of the graces of learning and the love of humanity" (MI, p. 273). Arnold's learning and humanism convinced him that his age was troubled by disunity in outlook and that orthodox Christianity, far from being a means to the rectification of man's evident disjunction with God and society, was itself increasingly symptomatic of the disorder of the time: "the thwarting cause is the same now as then [in former times]--the dogmatic system current, the so-called orthodox theology."[34] Dogma, and especially the dogma surrounding the "popular fairy-tale" regarding the miraculous events of Jesus's life had, Arnold believed, served to stultify the vitality of Christian faith and to act as a divisive factor between various Christian groups and outside groups such as the Jews. For him, the figure of Jesus was metaphorical, teaching mankind that correct behavior or "righteousness" was the truth of salvation. Through emulation of this figure, Arnold thought that the divided ways of man and God could be joined, as man attained a spiritual elevation. Because this process was historical and progressive, he viewed Christianity as a dynamic faith:

> But there is a difference between the religion of the Old Testament and Christianity. Of the religion of the Old Testament we can pretty well see to the end, we can trace fully enough the experimental proof of it in history. But of Christianity the future is as yet almost unknown.[35]

The value in Arnold's thinking for Victorian thinkers was in the fact that he accepted both tradition and progress, somehow not seeing these as being mutually exclusive.

Scott developed an outlook, about secular as well as religious subjects, similar to Arnold's in that the past could be both a necessary part of and a dangerous threat to, the future. In what he calls his sermon for the Globe newspaper, he describes a divinely linked service that is defined by an historical context:

> By this service we are linked to the past, and its throes are triumphant in us. So between the two abysses we stand conservators of the past, pioneers of the future. But we are most of all pioneers, the function of our service is one for progress, for advance; by these acts of humanity and usefulness we increase the store of the beauty and goodness of the race. (MI, p. 37)

Scott's sermonizing idealism overlooks some of the tensions inherent in the picture of progress he draws, tensions which are more apparent in the later poem "A Vision" (1921).

Using mixed themes of change and continuity in "A Vision," Scott pictures a multitude of kings, tyrants, priests, and "an innumerable host" marching in a funeral procession:

> Each bore a tuft of grass
> In his fingers;
> The grass was in seed,
> And as they walked
> The seed fell where it listed. (Poems, p. 247)

Birth and death complete one another as surely as one grows out of the other; the coincidental nature of the Past and Present is seen in the concluding lines of the poem:

> But what was buried
> Was far in the Past,
> And the host poured up
> From the Future. (Poems, p. 247)

Though each of the specific members of the host is "tortured with his symbol," that is, circumscribed to a certain degree by the historical backgrounds of his position, he will be renewed in the Future as surely as the grass will sprout from seed. Indeed, tradition can be a "live coal" or a "book-yoke," but the vital aspects of the past may be reborn and live in a future time.

In addition to the premise that the past is never really lost in the march to the future, Scott's historical view is based on two assumptions: the first is that all things in the range of human perception, including religious experience, are subject to change. The second is that all individuals possess the potential to contribute to the progression of human knowledge and insight. Though he reflected the thought of his Victorian culture in holding these attitudes, we can find earlier precedents for Scott's thought in the writings of Sir Thomas Browne and Michel de Montaigne. Both men bring to their respect for orthodox faith a belief that change can be brought about in part by the explorations of individual minds. Mankind, both men say in different ways, has not and likely never will reach a perfection or static completion of knowledge and insight.

In an essay titled "Wayfarers" (1947), Scott praises the life and writing of Sir Thomas Browne. He admires the man's prose style, but reserves most of his favorable commentary for Browne's judgments on history and mutability. Scott lauds "Urn Burial," for example, because it "examines the beliefs of antiquity, transmigration and rebirth, and the skill of the Egyptians" (CA, p. 87), and because Browne concludes that "the iniquity of oblivion blindely scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity."[36] In the same work, Browne says

> There is nothing strictly immortall, but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy it self. . . .[37]

All that transcend the processes of oblivion, Browne concludes, are God Himself and the souls of men through salvation.

Montaigne, the man whom Scott had said possessed "stores of wit and human kindliness and rare wisdom" (MI, p. 232), holds views which, though less strictly theological in emphasis, are similar to those held by Browne on mutability and permanence. Discussing the possibility of any person being able to make reasonable, sure and final judgments, he says

> Finally, there is no existence that is constant, either of our being or of that of objects. And we, and our judgment, and all mortal things go on flowing and rolling unceasingly. Thus nothing certain can be established about one thing by another, both the judging and the judged being in continual change and motion.[38]

Montaigne's skepticism leads him to maintain that the perfect knowledge of God's ways was impossible to achieve: "What man can know the counsel of God? or who can think what is the will of the Lord?" he asked.[39] Therefore, he said, since no man has the final answer to questions of origin or being, one must always be ready to consider new approaches and not be constrained by established doctrines:

> Thus when some new doctrine is offered to us, we have great occasion to distrust it, and to consider that before it was produced its opposite was in vogue; and, as it was overthrown by this one, there may arise in the future a third invention that will likewise smash the second. Before the principles which Aristotle introduced were in credit, other principles satisfied human reason, as his satisfy us at this moment. What letters-patent have these, what special privilege, that the course of our invention stops at them, and that to them belongs possession of our belief for all time to come? They are no more exempt from being thrown out than were their predecessors.[40]

If Montaigne offered a philosophy that was pragmatic with regard to the growth of knowledge, Browne revealed a less direct, more careful approach to the subject in theological terms. That man can comprehend a process working in his favor is an idea expressed by Browne in "Religio Medici":

> Before Abraham was, I am, is the saying of Christ, yet is it true in some sense if I say it of my selfe, for I was not onely before my selfe, but Adam, that is, in the Idea of God, and the decree of that Synod held from all Eternity. And in this sense, I say, the world was before the Creation, and at an end before it had a beginning; and thus was I dead before I was alive,

> though my grave be England, my dying place was Paradise, and Eve miscarried of mee before she conceiv'd of Cain.[41]

C. A. Patrides, in his commentary on the above passage, says that Browne's use of the first-person pronoun in these lines is significant because individual human perception is seen as capable of sharing the sense of a divine vision.[42] We can see a striking similarity between this idea of relatedness and Scott's description in the Mermaid Inn essay of March 19, 1892 of those acts by "conservators of the past, pioneers of the future" who "communicate with the subtle and divine mind" (MI, p. 37). Because he wished to believe that an essence was being preserved through time--by way of communication with the divine mind--Scott could accept the views held by Browne and still think that the history of human thought and action could evidence change and progress.

Scott's belief that individuals, and individual acts, were the vital link between the past and the future helps to explain the otherwise puzzling presence of miraculous or near-miraculous scenes and incidents in some of his writing. Because he believed that new thought and experience was always adding to the store of religious insight and human knowledge in general, Scott depicted the courses of ordinary people's lives intersecting with divine plan in works such as "The Mission of the Trees," "The Rose of Hope," and "Sister Ste Columbe." Browne had said of miracles that

> Wee doe too narrowly define the power of God, restraining it to our capacities. I hold that God can doe all things, how he should work his contradictions I do not understand, yet dare not therefore deny. . . . For strictly his power is the same with his will, and they both with all the rest doe make but one God.[43]

Miracles are proof of possibility; they are also proof that the secular experience may have significant spiritual authority. Scott defended this individual claim to awareness in stories such as "Sister Ste Columbe."

In "Sister Ste Columbe," Scott joins different forms of spiritual experience in one event: there is the established Church experience (represented by the Sister), the common, yet philosophically insightful view (held by the dying stranger), and the evolving view (possessed by the child Tertulien). The importance of the secular experience is emphasized by the representative historical names used in the text. Columban, though instrumental in spreading the monastic system in Europe, helped initiate a revival of lay spirituality on the Continent and used political systems to enhance his religious goals. He is an appropriate representative figure in the story because he strengthened the functional structures of orthodoxy while encouraging practices and conditions conducive to the continuing influence of the laity upon the Church. The theme of blended influences combining to ensure an evolution of attitudes is also supported by the inclusion of the name Tertulien. The historical figure Tertullian began his years of Christian preaching by attacking a group, the Montanists, which supported an informed and inspired laity, but he later joined with them. He came to believe, according to Paul Johnson, that "educated laymen should play their full part in the Church and declined absolutely to endorse an exclusive role for the clergy."[44] The shift in Tertullian's attitude, says Johnson, resulted in an interesting paradox: "Here was a great Church statesman, a man of impeccable rectitude and burning faith, embracing heresy."[45] For Scott, who tried to embrace a faith which balanced tradition with evolutionary change, the paradox made Tertullian a perfect representative figure.

Part Two: Historical Change and a Desire for Faith

We can see Scott examining the tensions posed by his desire for an historical Faith in three important poems: "Meditation at Perugia," "The Height of Land," and "Chiostro Verde." A number of similarities unite these works. In each, the narrator, a layman, speaks both as an observer of, and as a contributor to, the spiritual condition he describes. All three poems mark out a place, physical and temporal, which reflects the poet's sense that he is connected to a past and a future. Also, the works have in common the kind of refusal to express certitude, the refusal to assume dogmatic assertion, which Montaigne repeatedly advises in his essays. However, while the poems share many characteristics, they reveal a subtle adjustment in Scott's general mood and outlook: from "Meditation at Perugia," and "The Height of Land," both published in 1916, to "Chiostro Verde," which was written in 1935, there is a movement away from a guarded optimism about the future, and a growing fear that change may only bring the destruction and death of valued traditions and ideas.

Ambivalence, an uncertainty of mood, marks "Meditation at Perugia" (1916) as Scott tries to gauge the effect of growing knowledge upon established religious belief. The poet visits Perugia and considers the changes that have occurred since the time of St. Francis, whom he imaginatively addresses:

> Deeper our faith, but not so sweet as thine;
> Wider our view, but not so sanely sure;
> For we are troubled by the witching lure
> Of Science, with her lightning on the mist;
> Science that clears,
> Yet never quite discloses what she wist,
> And leaves us half with doubts and half with fears.[46]

True to the pattern established by the presence of historical figures in other works, St. Francis is a model of thought and action to be emulated and surpassed. Like the historical personages alluded to in "Sister Ste Columbe," St. Francis is a representative of Christian asceticism, but Scott undoubtedly saw the saint's religious vision of nature as an important precedent to the outlook of the modern age. Science, as Scott said in the "Poetry and Progress" speech, offered great opportunities for the growth in understanding of the natural world:

> Science has taught the modern that nature lives and breathes, and in looking at the mountains and the sea, he is moved to feelings based on growing knowledge, unutterable as yet in thought. The modern feels no sickness of soul which requires a panacea of quiescence; he is aware of imperfections and of vast physical and social problems, but life does not therefore interest him less but more. (DCS, p. 19)

Yet, Scott is not altogether sure that the paths that Science opens lead in directions that are best for faith: the faith seems deeper and wider, but also seems to lack the peaceful certitude that Scott believes St. Francis possessed. Though he is drawn to the exciting sense of exploration offered by Science, Scott reserves an intense desire to see that enquiry will support his vision of a transcendental nature:

> We act her [Science's] dreams that shadow forth the truth,
>   That somehow here the very nerves of God
> Thrill the old fires, the rocks, the primal sod. . . .
> (Poems, p. 131)

The last two stanzas of the poem derive their meaning from the use of a rhetorical device which ensures that the issues raised concerning the growth of knowledge will remain uncertain. Scott forms open-ended questions that are introduced by the words "Shall not," a method he also uses in "The Height of Land," and "Chiostro Verde." He concludes by looking to the future:

Shall we not prove, what thou hast faintly taught,
  That all the powers of earth and air are one,
  That one deep law persists from mole to sun?
Shall we not search the heart of God and find
  That law empearled,
Until all things that are in matter and mind
  Throb with the secret that began the world? (Poems, p. 132)

Two interpretative possibilities arise with the use of "shall": the first is that the poet hopes and believes that the teachings of St. Francis will be clarified and justified by the findings of Science. The second alternative is that the poet acknowledges that the "doubts" and "fears" aroused by Science may well spell the end of the faith that he values. Because the poem describes a moment of reflection at sunset, the time of day Scott associates with death in poems such as "The Forsaken," an interpretation which sees Scott's theme as the death of faith cannot be rejected. However, two aspects of the poem give support to the view that sees that the poet is hopeful, despite the fears caused by Science. First, St. Francis, who is addressed in the present tense, is a symbol of the continuing vitality of the Christian faith. His presence is proof of a transcendent essence which is unaffected by discoveries or changes in perception. Equally important to the basically hopeful mood of the poem is that, although the poet is unsure of the routes Science may take, he still holds the assumption that the result will reveal the "very nerves of God," the "most secret place" of God, and the secret law in the "heart of God." Whatever fundamental religious doubts might exist in the deep center of the poem are successfully concealed by the ambivalent nature of the narrator's questions.

While similar to "Meditation at Perugia" in several ways, "The Height of Land" is also different on significant points. The narrator of the longer poem, for instance, considers more closely the character of evolving wisdom and involves himself more personally in the consideration of religious questions than does the poet at Perugia. Dialectical argument, or the continued consideration of opposing points of view, turns the implied opposition of ideas seen in "Perugia" into a dramatic confrontation of desires in "The Height of Land." Scott attempts with "The Height of Land" to hold in a balanced tension two philosophical views that he believed were essentially contradictory: one view, which is more familiar and therefore more comfortable for the narrator, desires to maintain a blended heritage of Christian and Romantic ideals concerning man and Nature; the other view, which includes potentially disturbing ideas posed in part by Science, desires to accept certain truths implied by an evolutionary interpretation of history. He signals an acknowledgement of the former through allusions or echoes to a tradition of literary thought, and a claim to the latter through an examination of the objectivity of the poem's first-person narrator.

Three stages in the narrator's growing philosophical awareness order "The Height of Land": the first stage involves a search for an idealized Something which will inform thought and action and will reflect a unity between man and Nature; the second occurs when the poet's idealistic vision is interrupted by a perception of physical and temporal Nature that is more material than it is imaginative; and the third concerns the poet's attempt to reconcile his desire for intuitive certitude with his realization that life is evolutionary, diverse and provides few comforts for the subjective Self.

A great deal of evidence from the poem shows that Scott was writing his work partly as a response to certain ideas expressed in

William Wordsworth's The Prelude. Scott's high opinion of that poem, expressed several times in the Mermaid Inn columns, is summed up by his remark that the lines "embody a common experience" (MI, p. 338). The themes and structures of The Prelude, though sometimes reproduced ironically by Scott, provide a very basic model for the explorations found in "The Height of Land." M. H. Abrams is helpful for an understanding of the structures of The Prelude when he says the poem is ordered in three stages:

> There is a process of unified mental development which, although at times suspended, remains a continuum; this process is shattered by a crisis of apathy and despair; but the mind then recovers an integrity which, despite admitted losses, is represented as a level higher than the initial unity, in that the mature mind possesses powers, together with an added range, depth, and humanity, which are the products of the critical experiences it has undergone.[47]

Scott's poem also follows a growth of three stages, but journeys towards a crisis of unknowing. W. B. Gallie has noted the interrelationship in The Prelude between man's moral sense and his awareness of Nature:

> Nature, then, for Wordsworth when he is philosophising, means the fact that the extra-human world can have an incalculable moral effect on man. What is original in Wordsworth's thought is the notion that human happiness at its best arises out of a peculiar co-operation of this external nature and man's own inner nature; out of Nature's gift and man's response.[48]

In "The Height of Land" Scott too searches for a complete vision which would unite individual perception and Nature, but he cannot fully deny the limitations posed by Nature itself, the historical relativity of man's knowledge, or the solipsistic dangers posed by a faith based upon intuition.

Though a strong similarity exists between the situation in

Scott's poem and the situation in Book Thirteen (1850) of The Prelude, Scott intends that the similarity will have ironic implications. Wordsworth describes his first night on Mount Snowdon as a moment when a meditative vision reflected to him

> the type
> Of a majestic intellect, its acts
> And its possessions, what it has and craves,
> What in itself it is, and would become.
> There I beheld the emblem of a mind
> That feeds upon infinity, that broods
> Over a dark abyss, intent to hear
> Its voices issuing forth to silent light
> In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
> By recognitions of transcendent power,
> In sense conducting to ideal form,
> In soul of more than mortal privilege.
> One function, above all, of such a mind
> Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
> 'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
> That mutual domination which she loves
> To exert upon the face of outward things. . . .
> (Prelude, p. 463)

Scott also depicts a meditative experience, but his poem reveals an unresolved tension centering on Wordsworth's description of Nature's informing powers. His ascent to a physical height of land in the Canadian wilderness is a journey through a landscape of the ancient Empedoclean elements: earth, air, water and fire. These elements appear differently in each of the three stages of his journey and reflect the changing perceptions of the narrator.

In the first twenty-one lines of the poem, the natural elements are characterized by their removal, in a perceptual sense, from the narrator's immediate place:

Here is the height of land:
The watershed on either hand
Goes down to Hudson Bay
Or Lake Superior;
The stars are up, and far away
The wind sounds in the wood. . . . (Poems, p. 46)

The landscape and the objects in it are not particularized and are seen across a vague but significant space from the speaker. The watersheds are established by their final and distant drainage points, Hudson Bay and Lake Superior, and the stars are "up" and the wind is "far away." These lines serve to introduce the narrator's meditative mood, and the reality of the landscape must not be allowed to intrude upon the moment; in fact, when the narrator first becomes aware of the quality called Something, details around him conveniently recede:

The spruces have retired a little space
And left a field of sky in violet shadow
With stars like marigolds in a water-meadow. (Poems, p. 46)

Trees politely demur from intrusion, stars transform into pretty flowers growing in an imaginative element. The narrator, using a Wordsworthian model of nature, interprets the landscape as an environment hospitable to the vision he expects to experience.

Human society, undeniably present in the form of two Indian guides, is subordinated to the generalized and personified natural elements. Though the narrator is aware of the Indians' sad song, the wind sounds in the wood are "wearier" than their "long Ojibwa cadence." The atmosphere is serious and sublime as night finally deepens and there is "peace in the lofty air." Scott chooses the word "lofty" to reinforce the impression of physical distance, but the word is also an early indication of the narrator's self-ironic tone, with its combined meanings of "noble" and "pompous."

Into this "lofty" atmosphere "Something comes by flashes/ Deeper than peace . . ." (Poems, p. 47). The word Something, because it is capitalized, is evidently an idea or quality of importance, but the vagueness of the term resists semantic or philosophical characterization at this point in the poem. It is intuitive because it comes "by flashes," a phrase which recalls not only Wordsworth's description of moonlight on Snowdon (Prelude, p. 460), but also the way Tennyson described moments of religious awareness in the poem In Memoriam:

> The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
>   And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
>   Gives out at times--he knows not whence--
> A little flash, a mystic hint. . . .[49]

Tennyson describes the process of recollection in this passage using language which approximates a mysterious, or, as he says, a mystical experience. Scott also uses the word flash because his concept Something is profoundly moving and possibly possesses qualities of a divine transcendence, but its character eludes final definition.

In the first section of lines, then, Scott presents an ironic contrast between intention and practice on the part of the narrator. The portrayal of Nature as the source of the vague Something is consistent with Wordsworth's view, as described by Benziger:

> In the opening lines of [The Prelude] the life of nature seems to be the very symbol or complement of [Wordsworth's] own inner life, and communion with the outer vitality reinforces the inner.[50]

The narrator's intention in "The Height of Land" is to discover a similar complement, a similar communion, and his desire is so strong that he does perceive in the woods a Something coming by flashes. But his woods are to a great extent a creation of his imaginative vision and a denial of crucial aspects of the material world of nature. This denial is introduced by the act of distancing revealed in the first section, strengthened by the surrealistic imagery of the third section and reaches a climax in the concrete and disturbing portrait of nature in the fifth section.

The second section, three lines long, continues to build upon the impression that a significant distance exists between the narrator and his surroundings:

> Now the Indian guides are dead asleep;
> There is no sound unless the soul can hear
> The gathering of the waters in their sources. (Poems, p. 46)

Indian guides have been useful, bringing the narrator into the unknown landscape of physical actualities, but during his journey into spiritual insight they are evidently unnecessary. Primitive in their knowledge and awareness, they are merely "dead asleep" to his heightened state. Similarly, the narrator's intellectual vanity in this section ignores sense impressions in the landscape, so that only a meditative quiet prevails. "There is no sound," he says, but adds the qualification, "unless the soul can hear/ The gathering of the waters in their sources." The narrator's soul, on its lofty mission, does not respond to the landscape and its actual processes. Instead, it is the imagined sound of water, which serves as an appropriate image of the sense of growing awareness within the poet, that is perceived gathering around the speaker.

The ability to hear the small sounds of waters at their sources would demand preternatural powers of that sense, or an outright rejection of the sensuous faculties in favor of the powers of the imagination. The narrator obviously chooses the latter, as his perceptions in the next section are so strongly rooted in the imaginative inner world as to become surreal. In the opening lines of the third section, the narrator recalls the ascent of his day's journey:

> We have come up through the spreading lakes
> From level to level,--
> Pitching our tents sometimes over a revel
> Of roses that nodded all night,
> Dreaming within our dreams,
> To wake at dawn and find that they were captured
> With no dew on their leaves;
> Sometimes mid sheaves
> Of bracken and dwarf-cornel, and again
> On a wide blueberry plain
> Brushed with the shimmer of a bluebird's wing;
> A rocky islet followed
> With one lone poplar and a single nest
> Of white-throat-sparrows that took no rest
> But sang in dreams or woke to sing,--
> To the last portage and the height of land. . . .
> (Poems, p. 47)

Roses are personified and, in the multiple regression of dreaming within dreams, cease entirely to be real flowers. They have been "captured" in a dream world where they wake, impossibly, with "no dew on their leaves." Scott employs a conceit to show the landscape painted imaginatively as it is "Brushed with the shimmer of a bluebird's wing." Fittingly in this fantasy world of nature, birds never rested but "sang in dreams or woke to sing," a line which recalls one of Wordsworth's from The Prelude. The English poet describes a "selected bourne [which]/ Was now an Island musical with birds/ That sang and ceased not," in a passage which describes how he learned to value a "quiet independence of the heart" (Prelude, p. 69). The result of this period in his youth, according to Wordsworth, was that he "was taught to feel, perhaps too much,/ The self-sufficing power of Solitude" (Prelude, p. 71). Scott, by echoing the imagery of Wordsworth's discovery of the sometimes dangerously narrow joys of solitude, provides an ironic contrast to the outlook of his own narrator, who is determined to achieve the Wordsworthian meditative moment. Idealistic, and rooted in the conventions, rather than in the direct experience, of a romantic view of nature, the narrator's desire for insight is doomed to suffer disillusionment.

What the narrator envisioned when he reached the height of land is described as being a study in the antipodes of experience, which Scott ironically presents using exaggerated contrasts between Man and Nature:

> Upon one hand
> The lonely north enlaced with lakes and streams,
> And the enormous targe of Hudson Bay,
> Glimmering all night
> In the cold arctic light;
> On the other hand
> The crowded southern land
> With all the welter of the lives of men. (Poems, p. 47)

The north, in the narrator's recollected view, is an ideal representation of nature; it is "lonely" and untrammeled, it is beautifully "enlaced" with lakes and streams, it is represented by Hudson Bay, which is like a jewel "Glimmering all night" in the perfection of the "cold arctic light." The characterization of the Bay as a "targe," an uncommon word meaning a shield or buckler, is consistent with the way the narrator is using his idealized version of nature as a shield against more complex and potentially disillusioning perceptions of the natural world.

The description of the social world from which the narrator has journeyed is also exaggerated and inaccurate and echoes Wordsworth's perceptions in the First Book of The Prelude:

> Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
> Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
> That givest to forms and images a breath
> And everlasting motion, not in vain

By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar words of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things--
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart. (Prelude, p. 51)

Scott refers to this simplistic contrast between man and nature as he shapes the perceptions of his own narrator, who sees the perfect northern land in contrast with the "crowded" southern land. Again, Scott employs distinctive diction, choosing the archaic word "welter" to describe the narrator's vision of urban society. "Welter," meaning a confusion or turmoil, must be taken ironically because the word is too narrowly pejorative to reflect the commitment to society and its structures Scott expressed in his writing and demonstrated in his work in government. Also, Scott would have known that Wordsworth in his mature years saw that he had falsely subordinated Man in his esteem of Nature. Wordsworth, looking back on his life as a student, describes himself as an "idler among academic bowers" who

trembled,--thought, at times, of human life
With an indefinite terror and dismay,
Such as the storms and angry elements
Had bred in me; but gloomier far, a dim
Analogy to uproar and misrule,
Disquiet, danger, and obscurity. (Prelude, p. 301)

Uproar, misrule, disquiet, danger, obscurity--all are terms generally synonymous with "welter" and Scott's use of this latter word at this point in the poem places the narrator of "The Height of Land" in a similar stage of philosophical development as the immature and idealistic self Wordsworth depicts in his poem.

The image of the southern land is disagreeable to the narrator, who abruptly pushes it from his thoughts:

> But here is peace, and again
> That Something comes by flashes
> Deeper than peace,--a spell
> Golden and inappellable
> That gives the inarticulate part
> Of our strange being one moment of release
> That seems more native than the touch of time,
> And we must answer in chime;
> Though yet no man may tell
> The secret of that spell
> Golden and inappellable. (Poems, pp. 47-48)

In opposition to the noisy life of men, nature offers peace, and from this peace comes the mystical Something; it is a "spell" which awakens a resonant response from the "inarticulate" and "strange" part of man. Though he finds the spell compelling and transcendent, and apprehended by the imaginative and intuitive faculties, there is a hint in the word "yet" of an inner conflict. The intuitive sense which comes by flashes is beyond the limits of actuality, transcending the boundaries of physical experience, language, and time. It is mystical and absolute in its subjective origins. However, the qualification, "Though yet," presents the possibility that the transcendent vision may be defined in terms that are accessible to language, and to a wider, perhaps social, experience. Most importantly, the word "yet" implies that the transcendent experience may be a phenomenon which is subject to the influence of time in the form of historical change. This tension between the intuitive and the objective, the timeless and the historical, becomes the basis for the central conflict of perception in the poem.

Following the narrator's conditional, and at this point in the poem, almost insignificant, acceptance of an objective, material world governed by historical process, the fourth section of lines begins with an awakened sense of the actual world:

> Now are there sounds walking in the wood,
> And all the spruces shiver and tremble,
> And the stars move a little in their courses.
> The ancient disturber of solitude
> Breathes a pervasive sigh,
> And the soul seems to hear
> The gathering of the waters at their sources. . . .
> (Poems, p. 48)

Animals make noises in the forest, the wind moves the trees and stars mark the passage of time, but the narrator sees these phenomena as threats to his meditative mood and links them with the "ancient disturber of solitude." Because the ancient disturber appears in the poem just as the trees shiver and tremble, because it is said to breathe and because in the fifth section it carries the smell of burnt earth through the air, I take this figure to be an inversion of Wordsworth's life-giving spirit, the breeze. In Book First of The Prelude, the breeze seems half-conscious of the joy it gives, and awakes within the poet a creative "correspondent breeze" (Prelude, p. 31). In Scott's poem, the personified breeze is an element in the natural world but is perceived as destructive. Once again, he turns from the sensuous world around him so that he can hear the imaginary, transcendent sounds of waters that run beyond natural hearing.

The narrator struggles to regain his treasured moment, and is successful in the next lines:

> Then quiet ensues and pure starlight and dark;
> The region-spirit murmurs in meditation,
> The heart replies in exaltation
> And echoes faintly like an inland shell
> Ghost tremors of the spell. . . . (Poems, p. 48)

He recaptures the necessary sense of ideal peace and purity and imagines the correspondence where his heart answers nature in chime or, in these lines, like an inland shell echoing. To strengthen the desired mood, he returns to the clear contrasts he envisioned earlier between society and nature:

> Thought reawakens and is linked again
> With all the welter of the lives of men.
> Here on the uplands where the air is clear
> We think of life as of a stormy scene,--
> Of tempest, of revolt and desperate shock;
> And here, where we can think, on the bright uplands
> Where the air is clear, we deeply brood on life
> Until the tempest parts, and it appears
> As simple as to the shepherd seems his flock. . . .
> (Poems, p. 48)

The narrator's tone reaches a height of pomposity in these lines as he convinces himself that his intuitive vision yields insight that is both profound and simple. Shepherds, says Wordsworth in The Prelude, were "the men that pleased me first" (Prelude, p. 289), during his days of youthful enthusiasm and the narrator in Scott's poem, by referring to Wordsworth's idealized figure in the moment of supposed intuitive wisdom, unwittingly undercuts his own maturity and insight. However, the shepherd figure serves another purpose, one that is not limited to the specific, individual case of Scott's narrator. The shepherd, a common Christian image for Jesus, serves to introduce the Christian humanist ideals described in the next lines:

> A Something to be guided by ideals--
> That in themselves are simple and serene--
> Of noble deed to foster noble thought,
> And noble thought to image noble deed,
> Till deed and thought shall interpenetrate,
> Making life lovelier, till we come to doubt
> Whether the perfect beauty that escapes
> Is beauty of deed or thought or some high thing
> Mingled of both, a greater boon than either. . . .
> (Poems, pp. 48-49)

This ideal vision is significant for two reasons. It sounds very much like the Christian sentiments found in the essay Scott wrote on the importance of service for the Mermaid Inn column in 1892, and because Scott's narrator speaks in the plural "we," the speaker presumes to speak for his time and his culture. The narrator's assertion, as he speaks from a physical height, is that the described ideal is also a religious and moral height. The arrogance of individual belief is joined to the arrogance of a cultural belief which presumes that its views attain perfection. The combination is symbolized by an idealized picture of nature:

> Thus have we seen in the retreating tempest
> The victor-sunlight merge with the ruined rain,
> And from the rain and sunlight spring the rainbow.
> (Poems, p. 49)

A rainbow's beauty, the apparently perfect synthesis of water and light, is nevertheless a transitory thing. The rainbow Scott's narrator imagines is the symbolic attainment of the idealistic vision that has been nurtured throughout the first stage of the poem, and it is a vision which finds qualification in the second stage of the poem's development.

The second stage of the poem represents Scott's attempt, through the experience of his narrator, to build upon and go beyond Wordsworth's narrative about the growth of perception and wisdom. The central crisis in The Prelude, identified by Abrams as the poem's second of three stages of development, involves Wordsworth's deep disappointment over the nature of man; the crisis in "The Height of Land" involves the narrator's perception of Nature and leads to a questioning of the efficacy of a transcendent vision based on intuitive insights. The inverted version of Wordsworth's creative breeze introduces this stage:

> The ancient disturber of solitude
> Stirs his ancestral potion in the gloom,
> And the dark wood
> Is stifled with the pungent fume
> Of charred earth burnt to the bone
> That takes the place of air. . . . (Poems, p. 49)

Again, the wind acts to disrupt the meditative moment by carrying the odor of burning through the air to the narrator. This change in the pattern of thought is not voluntary on his part and represents a departure from the subjectively-ordered perceptions of the previous sections of the poem. The burnt earth image is strong in sensuous acuity and forces itself upon his awareness:

> The last weird lakelet foul with weedy growths
> And slimy viscid things the spirit loathes,
> Skin of vile water over viler mud
> Where the paddle stirred unutterable stenches,
> And the canoes seemed heavy with fear,
> Not to be urged toward the fatal shore
> Where a bush fire, smouldering, with sudden roar
> Leaped on a cedar and smothered it with light
> And terror. (Poems, p. 49)

This fifth section of the poem presents the four ancient elements--wind, water, earth and fire--in a way that is dramatically different from the descriptions of the natural setting that occur earlier. While this landscape obviously is not pretty, it also is not awe-inspiring in the way the mountain in the famous boat incident was to the poet of The Prelude. Scott's intention, in the fire scene, is to depict the destruction of the basis of the narrator's smug meditative vision, and to do this he shows a landscape utterly destroyed:

> It had left the portage-height
> A tangle of slanted spruces burned to the roots,
> Covered still with patches of bright fire
> Smoking with incense of the fragrant resin
> That even then began to thin and lessen
> Into the gloom and glimmer of ruin. (Poems, p. 49)

In this Tennysonian portrait of a Nature "red in tooth and claw," the spontaneous and evidently meaningless violence of the landscape is directly opposed to the transcendent vision of the poem's fourth section: the rain and sunlight of the rainbow find antithesis in the "gloom and glimmer of ruin." The invasion of the actual, material world has been totally successful; the meditative moment lies shattered, and with it lies the narrator's faith in an intuitive idealism. In the remaining lines of the poem, the narrator attempts to salvage the remnants of his former vision, while trying to assimilate the implications of his new-found awareness of a world where all things--including insight--are subject to change.

The third stage of the poem opens with the narrator's exhausted admission of temporal awareness:

> 'Tis overpast. How strange the stars have grown;
> The presage of extinction glows on their crests
> And they are beautied with impermanence;
> They shall be after the race of men
> And mourn for them who snared their fiery pinions,
> Entangled in the meshes of bright words. (Poems, p. 50)

The narrator notes the evidences of mortal existence, how time and the universe have moved while he has busied himself with thoughts he believed were transcendent. He recognizes, with imagery similar to that used in the bush fire scene, how the "bright words" of his idealism contain the machinery of their own destruction, and pass away before the obliterating effects of time. In contrast to his behavior in the fourth section of lines, where he regarded the actual presence of the forest as an intrusion upon his meditations, the seventh section shows the narrator aware of the physical details of the forest as part of a new vision:

> A lemming stirs the fern and in the mosses
> Eft-minded things feel the air change, and dawn
> Tolls out from the dark belfries of the spruces.
> (Poems, p. 50)

As the narrator's line of vision ascends from the ground level to the tops of trees, he reveals an ordering of life that is symbolic of evolutionary change. Lower or older forms on the evolutionary scale are represented by mosses and "eft-minded things." The word eft has commonly been replaced by "newt," an amphibian creature, and in terms of biological evolution the amphibian provides support for the theory of transitional life forms. As well, the word "eft," with the additional meaning of "a second time," or "again," or "back," indicates a sequence or transition that is in keeping with one of the two alternative theories of knowledge considered in the poem's seventh section: that man's knowledge, including his spiritual insight, is simultaneously linked to the past, and in a state of continual change that brings new forms or ideas.

In addition to the relatively simple plants--mosses--and the lower, cold-blooded animals--reptiles--Scott depicts a higher form of plant life, the ferns, and a warm-blooded animal, the lemming. The narrator's line of vision ascends from these life forms on the forest floor to the relatively complex plants, the trees, which are seen standing at a height, tolling the symbolic light of renewal. Similarly, the words which follow evidence an intellectual optimism, a desire that knowledge too is evolutionary and progressive:

> How often in the autumn of the world
> Shall the crystal shrine of dawning be rebuilt
> With deeper meaning![51]

In these lines, the narrator voices a desire to believe in progress and adopts a skepticism similar to that of the Christian thinker Montaigne who said that prevailing opinions should be questioned and tested and not viewed as the summit of human knowledge. The doubting mind, Montaigne had taught, made possible a life of discovery. In the third stage of his poem, Scott presents the tension formed by the opposition between the desire to continue the skeptic's quest into the future and the desire to maintain a faith in knowledge that is intuitive and basically Christian in emphasis.

The opposition is revealed as the poem's narrator compares his own outlook with that of a future poet. The tone of the lines becomes self-mocking:

> Shall the poet then,
> Wrapped in his mantle on the height of land,
> Brood on the welter of the lives of men
> And dream of his ideal hope and promise
> In the blush sunrise? (Poems, p. 50)

The "mantle" or protective cloak recalls the shield image of the earlier idealistic vision of nature, the "targe" of Hudson's Bay. In this first of a series of questions that begin with the ambivalent "Shall," the narrator appears to see hope in a future vision which will not accept self-indulgent and simplistic brooding, or ideals that figure forth as pretty sunrises. The same skepticism is turned upon the principles of Christian humanism, as the narrator continues to wonder what views a future poet might hold:

> Shall he base his flight
> Upon a more compelling law than Love
> As Life's atonement; shall the vision
> Of noble deed and noble thought immingled
> Seem as uncouth to him as the pictograph
> Scratched on the cave side by the cave-dweller
> To us of the Christ-time? (Poems, p. 50)

The naming of Love as a law and the description of the age as Christian bring to mind the Christian piety of the 1850 version of The Prelude, where a "spiritual Love" combines with Imagination to yield a "Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought/ Of human Being, Eternity, and God" (Prelude, p. 469). But, even a Faith as treasured as this, in the context of the question, is merely a function of man's ever-evolving perception. As Scott was to say in 1922:

> It is the mission of new theories in the arts, and particularly of new theories that come to us illustrated by practice, to force us to re-examine the grounds of our preferences, and to retest our accepted dogmas. Sometimes the preferences are found to be prejudices and the dogmas hollow formulae. (DCS, p. 23)

Scott's thoughts on art find an echo in the reflections of his narrator on religious insight: it is the skeptic's determination to remain open to the revelations of change which informs both views.

The first three questions in the third stage of the poem admit the possibility that all things within the realm of human understanding are mutable; the fourth question involves a subtle shift to matters more subjective, more emotional, more intuitive and, correspondingly, less firm in a disciplined skepticism than those previous to it:

> Shall he stand
> With deeper joy, with more complex emotion,
> In closer commune with divinity,
> With the deep fathomed, with the firmament charted,
> With life as simple as a sheep-boy's song,
> What lies beyond a romaunt that was read
> Once on a morn of storm and laid aside
> Memorious with strange immortal memories? (Poems, p. 50)

An oddity immediately presents itself to the reader's eye in these lines: the asyntactical and ungrammatical jump between "sheep-boy's song" and "What lies beyond" signals the posing of a rhetorical question. Where the first three questions addressed the possibility of a social and religious vision intellectually apprehended, this question narrows the inquiry to a subjective vision that is privately emotional and intuitive. Is it possible, the narrator asks in a sequence of prepositional phrases, that the present emotional range of human responses will ever be surpassed? The use of a comma instead of a period after "song" represents the posing of an immediate and obvious answer to this pressing question.

What can possibly lie "beyond" the depth of the imaginative experience, the narrator finds himself asking, even if the catalyst for that experience is itself an outmoded "romaunt"? The truth and immense power of this imaginative and emotional experience is captured by a strengthening consonantal echo, which begins with the "m" in "romaunt" and continues with "morn," "storm," "memorious" and culminates in "immortal memories." The consonance created with these words is a re-enactment of the earlier scene when the narrator said that "The heart replies in exaltation/ And echoes faintly like an inland shell. . . ." After having tried to subordinate his subjective vision of life to a belief in an historical and evolutionary view held by a hypothetical poet, the narrator finds he must admit the significance that a Christian and Wordsworthian way of thinking still has for him. Vague admission becomes clear affirmation in the next question, as the narrator states a personal desire:

> Or shall he see the sunrise as I see it
> In shoals of misty fire the deluge-light
> Dashes upon and whelms with purer radiance,
> And feel the lulled earth, older in pulse and motion,
> Turn the rich lands and the inundant oceans
> To the flushed colour, and hear as now I hear
> The thrill of life beat up the planet's margin
> And break in the clear susurrus of deep joy
> That echoes and reëchoes in my being? (Poems, pp. 50-51)

Again, there is a sense of a Wordsworthian Nature which causes a sympathetic echo to sound in man, and we can see that Scott's narrator tries to accommodate his discovery of evolutionary truths to this basic and older view. The fire which earlier in the poem had appeared as a terrifying destroyer of both forest and ideals is now incorporated with other elements of an inspiring Nature. Similarly, the earth is lulled and at peace, even though the narrator accepts that it changes and ages.

If the poem had ended with an abiding sense of inner echoing joy, Scott would have conveyed the impression that his narrator had reconciled the two opposing views depicted in the poem. However, the final lines are a study in the ambivalence of desires:

> O Life is intuition the measure of knowledge
> And do I stand with heart entranced and burning
> At the zenith of our wisdom when I feel
> The long light flow, the long wind pause, the deep
> Influx of spirit, of which no man may tell
> The Secret, golden and inappellable? (Poems, p. 51)

The lack of punctuation in the line that begins "O Life is intuition" makes possible two readings, each convincing in its own way. The first possibility is that "O" is a simple ejaculatory construction, followed by "Life" as a subject, "intuition" as a predicate noun, and "the measure of knowledge" as an appositive. This interpretation is consistent with the intuitive sense of identification that the poet affirms in the lines just previous to this passage, as his being "echoes" to the vital spirit of Nature, and with the sense of awe stirred by imagination's power, seen in the passage concerning the "romaunt."

The second possible interpretation of the line beginning "O Life" sees the narrator returning to the doubting, questioning mode which seeks to qualify the subjective and intuitive statements of preceding passages. The narrator addresses "Life," implies a comma pause, then poses the question "is intuition the measure of knowledge?" Read in this way, the thought informing the line shows greater doubt and less certitude in the ultimate insight to be gained by intuition.

The ambivalent possibilities of the last six lines of "The Height of Land" are intentional: Scott, by deliberately creating a statement which defies a single interpretation, is able to mirror the ambivalence he feels towards the alternatives he poses in the poem. His personal inclination, or subjective desire, is to listen as Nature's "region-spirit murmurs in meditation," to believe that his soul transcends its physical and temporal limits as it responds to this spirit, and to know that he intuitively achieves a "zenith" of spiritual knowledge. His intellectually disciplined, and more objective, desire is to achieve Montaigne's acceptance of personal limitation and doubt, and to accept historical and evolutionary change as universally applicable, even to himself and to the sum of man's knowledge.

The future, with its promise of changes in knowledge and belief, is viewed with a mixture of eagerness and apprehension in "Meditation at Perugia" and "The Height of Land." By the time he writes "Chiostro Verde" (1935), Scott is less able to accept peacefully the passing of the forms and concepts of a Christian-based belief. It is as if Scott himself has become in the poem his hypothetical poet of the future and cannot fully deny the passing of the ideal vision of noble deed and noble thought, the dimming of Love's promise. Scott no longer looks to reconcile himself with God, as he did in "The Lesson," with a consoling Love. Instead, in "Chiostro Verde," he yearns for evidence of a transcendent presence and order, and his questioning search ends in a hollow, dying echo of doubt.

"Chiostro Verde," a lament, must be considered a work of major thematic importance in the Scott canon, especially in terms of its religious and aesthetic statements. Set in Italy, the poem recalls the sadness of Matthew Arnold's "Lines from the Grande Chartreuse" in the recognition of an order that is passing. Scott establishes the mood for the poem in the opening description of setting:

> Here in the old Green Cloister
> At Santa Maria Novella
> The grey well in the centre
> Is dry to the granite curb;
> No splashing will ever disturb
> The cool depth of the shaft. (GC, p. 21)

As a symbol, the well expresses the dichotomy between the essence and the embodiments of faith that Scott develops in the poem. The Church, like the well, has become dry and unyielding, and can no longer act as a source of sustaining vision. "Worn with the tides of time," both the walls of the cloister and the walls of dogma face complete erosion. Even Scott's beloved interests, music and painting, no longer exist in vital forms within the Church, as the glories of religious art are seen to have existed in some distant and disappearing past. The poet hears a boys choir singing:

> A cadence of Palestrina
> Or something of even older days,
> No words--only the tune.
> It dies now--too soon. (GC, p. 22)

The past reaches imperfectly into the present, an impression which is emphasized by the distance and vagueness suggested in the lines "Falling with delicate grace,/ Boy's voices from the far off choir." In a similar mood, the poet turns his attention to a group of frescoes by Paolo Uccello, a Renaissance painter:

> Once they were clear and mellow
> Now they have fallen away
> To a dull green-grey,
> What has not fallen will fall;
> Of all colour bereft. . . . (GC, p. 22)

Frescoes cling weakly under the roof just as hymns hang faintly in the air, and descriptions of both use forms of the words "fallen" and "bereft."

An unmistakable sense of painful nostalgia informs Scott's recording of what he sees and hears at the cloister and the implication of what he feels is caught in the first of two structuring series of questions. The questions may be taken from the poem and viewed together:

> Will music forever die,
> The soul bereft of its cry,
> And no young throats
> Vibrate to clear new notes?
> . . . .
> Will nothing at last be left
> But a waste wall?
> Will painting forever perish,
> Will no one be left to cherish
> The beauty of life and the world,
> Will the soul go blind of the vision? (GC, p. 22)

The Christian Church, Scott believed, was in a crisis, and his questions show the direction which Christianity must take to survive. First, a renewal of forms and expressions was needed, the infusion of "young throats" and "new notes." Second, because Scott saw the Church as a social institution, the new expressions must be grounded in the present and reflect the "beauty of life and the world." Without the link between man's inner spiritual character and his outer definition as a worldly creature constantly reasserted, the soul would surely go both blind and deaf.

Whatever hope the poet holds for the renewal of faith is based on the possibility that man may rediscover the vitality of life, especially as it is evidenced in Nature. Against the opening scene of sterility and decay Scott opposes a scene that is quietly vital:

> In the stone-bordered quadrangle
> Daisies, in galaxy, spangle
> The vivid cloud of grass.
> Four young cypresses fold
> Themselves in their mantles of shadow
> Away from the sun's hot gold;
> And roses revel in the light,
> Hundreds of roses. . . . (GC, p. 21)

In opposition to the grey dryness of the well Scott sets the fecundity of the natural world, but the image does not simply end with intimations of Nature's beauty. The flowers and trees serve to remind the reader that, in an important sense, the name Chiostro Verde is not ironic. Though ravaged by time and the elements, the cloister does hold within itself certain evidences of the essence of life: daisies appear in an infinitude that transcends the boundaries of place, and a stand of cypresses creates a shadowed miniature cloister. This latter image is highly suggestive, especially when viewed in conjunction with the other picture of youth in the poem, the choir boys. The cypresses create their own cloister of shadow which protects them against the harsh sun; a rebirth of the faith will take place, not because the Church has attempted to cloister itself against the harsh realities of time and change, but because young believers will be stronger for having accepted the world as part of their faith. Traditional forms protect only briefly, while the essential faith is as unbounded as the daisies and as self-reliant as the cypresses.

Though Scott emphasizes that the forms of faith are properly susceptible to man's will and should therefore change as a function of man's development, he wishes to retain the idea of a transcendent creative force in the universe existing beyond the understanding and influence of man. He introduces this concept through an analogy to the creative man, the artist. The roses in the cloister are unique, Scott says, in color and shade, and their beauty could possibly be captured, but only through an impossible act of perception. The artist would have to "gather/ The flush that fades over Arno/ Under Venus at sundown/ And dye a snow-rose with the colour . . ." (GC, p. 21). The star Venus appears in the comparison as a presiding entity, governing the creation of perfection with Love, and introduction of the pagan entity is particularly apt, given the fact that the Greek goddess is associated with vegetation and fertility. By showing that a perfect human creation or re-creation of the roses' beauty would be possible only under the governing influence of Love, Scott attempts to find solace in an ideal that he has questioned seriously in the earlier poem, "The Height of Land." What is missing in "Chiostro Verde" is the desire to believe, with combined eagerness and anxiety, that man's faith may evolve to forms beyond Christianity itself; what is present instead is anxiety alone, a fear of loss which ultimately turns on Scott's uncertainty regarding the existence of God.

Scott does not clearly reject the idea of a God or the idea of a viable Christianity in "Chiostro Verde," just as he did not clearly choose one of the two philosophical views presented in "The Height of Land." Instead he creates an ambivalence, using his favorite rhetorical device, the open-ended question, which both defines and undercuts a religious position. As the poet turns his attention from the dying sound of the hymns, he sees birds in flight:

> While the cadence was hovering in air
> The pigeons were flying
> In front of the seasoned stone,
> Visiting here and there,
> Cooing from the cool shade
> Of their nooks in the wall;
> Who taught the pigeons their call
> Their murmurous music? (GC, p. 22)

From the faltering hymns of man, Scott moves to a consideration of the natural music of birds and the implied author of their music. The notion of a divine artist is imparted through suggestion, a method that is repeated when Scott considers the contrast with the frescoes by Uccello:

> Who painted those silver lights in the daisies
> That sheen in the grass-cloud
> That hides their stars or discloses,
> Who stained the bronze-green shroud
> Wrapping the cypress
> Who painted the roses? (GC, p. 23)

By returning to the natural visual and aural beauties of the cloister, Scott expresses a desire to find that the primary source of spiritual inspiration will always be in a natural world which takes shape under the hand of a Judeo-Christian God.

However, the familiar rhetorical device, a sequence of questions, leaves the reader with ambivalent considerations. Though the question "Who painted the roses?" obviously directs attention to a transcendent creator or artist-figure, it cannot be rejected as a sincere plea for knowledge and insight. The poet, thinking that a vital essence must be behind the decaying forms of faith, cannot still all his doubts. In "The Height of Land" Scott tried, with limited success, to balance an objective historical view with a subjective intuitive perception; in "Chiostro Verde," he tries, with similar mixed results, to still the inner drive for certainty with a vision of the supreme artist. The sense of peace and acceptance he desires never surmounts the reality of uneasily balanced tensions in the poem.

The difficulties Scott encounters in "Meditation at Perugia," "The Height of Land," and "Chiostro Verde" can be traced to the fact that he attempts to apply to theological questions those approaches which worked so well for him with questions of correct conduct. In works such as "The Forsaken," his Stoical outlook sought and evidently grasped a vision of action governed by intellectual acceptance. The appeal of Stoicism (and of Stoical Christianity) for Scott is its rootedness in a material world of process and conduct. When he tries to apply the same principles to theological questions however, he finds that a deep personal need to reveal ontological secrets frustrates the possibility of spiritual peace. Scott discovers himself in a dilemma which, ironically, would have been avoided if he had either remained an orthodox Christian or rejected Christianity altogether. Ultimately, Scott is a philosophical and poetical thinker, not a Christian thinker, a distinction which is made clearer by referring to an essay by T. S. Eliot:

> The Christian thinker--and I mean the man who is trying consciously and conscientiously to explain to himself the sequence which culminates in faith, rather than the public apologist--proceeds by rejection and elimination. He finds the world to be so and so; he finds its character inexplicable by any non-religious theory: among religions he finds Christianity, and Catholic Christianity, to account most satisfactorily for the world and especially for the world within; and thus, by what Newman calls 'powerful and concurrent' reasons, he finds himself inexorably committed to the dogma of the Incarnation. To the unbeliever, this method seems disingenuous and perverse: for the unbeliever is, as a rule, not so greatly troubled to explain the world to himself, nor so greatly distressed by its disorder; nor is he generally concerned (in modern terms) to 'preserve values'.[52]

A number of points worthy of serious debate emerge from Eliot's definition of the Christian thinker, but one is particularly illuminating (and perhaps easily overlooked because so obvious) for this study of Scott: that the Incarnation story forms the foundation of Christian thought. Christianity begins with certain non-recurring historical events, such as the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and interprets the world according to the significance of these events. The figure of Jesus acts to unite the otherwise exclusive worlds of natural and supernatural experience. Scott, like so many of his contemporaries, sought other means to unify these experiences and thought he could reconcile the transcendentalism of his literary heritage with the materialism of science and evolutionism.

His inability to embrace either orthodox Christianity or the modern scientific spirit deprives him of both the terminology and the theoretical frameworks necessary to articulate a coherent and, for him, satisfying belief. He is forced, in a poem such as "The Height of Land," to wonder whether subjective insight, the "flash" of intuition, holds any ultimate answers, and his final stance in that work is close to mysticism. Scott was torn between a need to know and a need to admit that knowing was impossible, and mysticism, as Thomas Merton says, is not likely to make the choice any easier:

> . . . in Christian mysticism the question whether or not the mystic can get along without the human "form" (Gestalt) or the sacred Humanity of Christ is still hotly debated, with the majority opinion definitely maintaining the necessity for the Christ of faith to be present as ikon at the center of Christian contemplation. Here again, the question is confused by the failure to distinguish between the objective theology of Christian experience and the actual psychological facts of Christian mysticism in certain cases. And then one must ask, at what point do the abstract demands of theory take precedence over the psychological facts of experience? Or, to what extent does the theology of a theologian without experience claim to interpret correctly the "experienced theology" of the mystic who is perhaps not able to articulate the meaning of his experience in a satisfactory way?[53]

The intended ambivalence in the poem makes it difficult to conclude how much of the forest experience in "The Height of Land" is an expression of Scott's psychological needs and how much is the result of an objective understanding of religion and historical progression. Clearly, the insights of that work are shaped in great part by the Christian tradition Scott valued, and reveal a need to know, and to share, experience. Christian artists, according to Merton, try to transcend the limited experience:

> To experience the mystery of Christ mystically or otherwise is always to transcend the merely individual psychological level and to "experience theologically with the Church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*)." In other words, this experience must always be in some way reducible to a theological form that can be shared by the rest of the Church or that shows that it is a sharing of what the rest of the Church experiences.[54]

The orthodox Christian desires to know, but satisfies his desire with faith in Christ. Scott desires to know, but can never really complete his spiritual quest because part of his theological conviction entails a belief in progress and change. Ironically, Scott's theory of history made him unfit intellectually for the traditions he wished to use, as well as for the future he wished to inhabit. In this respect, he is not unlike his tragic Indian figures who stand between two cultural worlds, but are part of neither.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORM OF DISORDER

The outstanding characteristic of D. C. Scott's career in the civil service is, not surprisingly, efficiency. Government bureaucracies owe their longevity to the appearance, if not the substance, of the smooth execution of duty, and Scott knew this fact well. If ever a contingency or implied failure of policy arose in the Department of Indian Affairs, compensating action would be implemented with a minimum of public introspection: the Indian Reserve system, once seen as a sure method of assimilation, was quietly deemphasized during Scott's administration, and the Indian farm program, which he once enthusiastically supported, saw a gradual decline towards the end of his term as administrator. Scott could always point to the historical continuity of the Department as proof of the efficacy of his programs; the transformation of individual plans did not alter the fact that something worthwhile was being done for Canada's native population. Problems were being solved.

If any important difference exists between the aspects of Scott as Indian administrator and Scott as writer, it is in this area of clear and unwavering purpose: though the sense of conviction reflected in the workings of the Department might lead us to expect a powerful didacticism in his writing, we find instead an inquiring and problematic body of work. A great deal of his writing takes the form of an empirical observation which sees the writer introducing psychological and social forces to an experimental environment, then carefully noting the unfolding processes. It would be misleading, however, to make too much of this methodological objectivity, since Scott's experiments nearly always depict individual or social neuroses. His theoretical assumption is that disorder in its various forms is pathological. This is what Scott meant when he said, in another context, that a "virus has infected all the arts; the desire for rebellious, violent and discordant expression has invaded even the serene province of Music" (DCS, p. 20). Scott was not delivering a conservative jeremiad against change; in fact, he says in the same essay that there is an essential inquiring spirit in art which "endeavors to interpret the world in new terms of beauty, to find unique symbols, images and analogies for the varied forms of life" (DCS, p. 19). Change was the empirical forge where Scott tempered his idealism; he was enough of a Victorian to believe that process would bring progress, though he was convinced a guiding hand was needed. Conversely, moral and social disorder was almost always violent and destructive and revealed an absence of two crucial human elements: rationality and love. If either of these elements was missing process would quickly become disorder, bringing destruction and the death of an organism, whether individual or social. Scott explored the problem of disorder on two general levels: on the theoretical ground of historical change in society, and on the more individual plane of psychological behavior and social interaction.

Scott has received little recognition as a social analyst, and the reason seems to lie in the fact that critics have read the Indian poems as pieces of intense, though narrow, poetical vision. In fact, the Indian poems may be seen as a paradigm of Scott's social thought, the specific working out of a general thesis.

The Indian poems have stirred controversy because they seem to lack a simple and clear authorial tone. Since Scott's position with regard to his Indian subject matter is complex, some critics have charged him with ambiguity and even racism. One such critic, John Flood, accuses Scott of duplicity, saying the poet showed sympathy for the natives in his poems while practising what amounted to genocide in the Department.[1] The facts do not support the claim that Scott was plotting to exterminate the Indians; though Department practices of the time may now appear to have been misguided, the intention of policy was to benefit "individual" Indians. I emphasize the word individual because Scott clearly distinguished between the Indian as a separate person and the Indian as a racial group with distinctive cultural and religious values. Flood's failure to appreciate the presence of this distinction explains why he thinks Scott embodies suspicious contradictions: how could one man be coldly inhumane in Department dealings, sympathetic in the poetry, and distanced in the prose where "Indians are like stage props,"[2] unless he was motivated by a calculating cynicism? Actually, Scott is quite consistent in his attitudes, an observation which can be supported by seeing that Indian figures in the literature are subject to the same laws of social process as are, for example, the laborers in the poem "The Harvest." In both cases, Scott is treating a specific problem involving historical development, and the individuals who appear in the works, while having an intrinsic worth and importance, are shown as being necessarily subordinate to larger processes. To illustrate, I will turn to a poem that is similar to the Indian poems in terms of its social implications.

The publication of the work "The Harvest" in 1898 is a seeming anomaly in the Scott canon. As is the case with his other literary attempts at social analysis, Scott is concerned in this poem with identifying a problem and allowing it to grow in its implications, but here he is more obvious in his moral didacticism. The poem describes the poverty of agrarian workers the world over and captures the moment when these people discover in themselves a revolutionary potential:

> Millions of children
> Born to their terrible
> Ancestral hunger,
> Starved in their mother's womb,
> Starved at the nipple, cry--
> Ours is the Harvest! (Poems, p. 108)

"The Harvest" is interesting because it contains anomalous elements while at the same time being so typical of Scott's work. Rarely does Scott venture into fields so obviously socialist and revolutionary in sympathetic zeal. The exact date of writing is so far unknown but the poem was included in the Labor and the Angel collection, which appeared only five years after Scott's collaboration with Archibald Lampman and Wilfred Campbell from 1892 to 1893 on the newspaper series of essays entitled At the Mermaid Inn. Scott had, according to E. K. Brown, a brief but active connection with a Fabian group in Ottawa during this time,[3] which, along with the influence of the social criticism of Lampman and Campbell, helps to explain the otherwise unusual presence of this poem in the Scott canon. Later, in the play Pierre and in the Untitled Novel, Scott would take a more qualified view of socialistic causes and their supporters.

The representative quality of "The Harvest" is in its identification of an historical problem as the central catalyst of action. In this case, and in so much of Scott's work, the problem is the suppression of a natural order, an order which implicitly suggests a kind of progress. Scott never openly names the villains in this piece, those who have stood in the way of the elevation of the peasants, but he points directly to the methods used:

> Man that had taken
> God for a master
> Made him a law,
> Mocked him and cursed him,
> Set up this hunger,
> Called it necessity,
> Put in the blameless mouth
> Judas's language:
> The Poor ye have with you
> Alway, unending. (Poems, p. 109)

Andrew Macphail, if he had read these lines, would have found he had little in common with Scott's view. Macphail had stated that a social hierarchy was indeed a "necessity" and that the poor were even constitutionally unfit for improvement. Scott's own vision is less a liberal opposition to Macphail's kind of idealistic conservatism than a pragmatic belief in a different kind of necessity: the natural progression of historical events and structures. The millions of men, women and children pictured as starving and otherwise suffering do, of course, elicit a sympathy but they serve as a catalogue of elements leading to the real critical center of the poem, the dramatic moment of imminent action:

> When will the reapers
> Strike in their sickles?
> Ask not the question;
> Something tremendous
> Moves to the answer. (Poems, p. 108)

Individualized characters have no real place in the poem because Scott is orchestrating elements around his principal message. The suppression of historical change leads to the building of violent forces ("Long have they sharpened/ Their fiery, impetuous/ Sickles of carnage"), and the poem captures the moment before the cataclysmic release.

The intellectually and emotionally perverted impulse, suggested by the phrase "Judas's language," resists change temporarily but gives eventual birth to a violent revolution, itself irrational and unloving. The crowds are described as a "Tempest and fury" characterized by the irresistible flow of inhuman, unconscious force:

> On they come fluctuant,
> Seething and breaking,
> Weltering like fire
> In the pit of the earthquake,
> Bursting in heaps
> With the sudden intractable
> Lust of the hunger. . . .   (Poems, p. 111)

The people in "The Harvest" are part of a mass purposely shown as being reduced and undifferentiated by the atrocity of their situation. If they are at all noble, it is because they function as tragic symbols, a fact that is important to remember when examining Scott's Indian characters.

"The Harvest" is a didactic poem which isolates and affirms the correctness of historical process; Scott soon showed in other poems that the historical scenario was greatly complicated if it included more intimate portraits of those individuals caught in the flow of social transition. Works such as "The Half-Breed Girl," "The Onondaga Madonna" and "Watkwenies" are about a race of people suffering a racial and cultural death, but also depict individuals who suffer because they are neither of the past nor yet of the future. Scott saw in the Indians a clear illustration of Matthew Arnold's observation that, in the sweep of history, some people would be creatures

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born.[4]

Scott pictured one of these wanderers in "The Half-Breed Girl," a poem which sacrifices psychological realism to achieve the clarity of what is, according to the poet, an historical truth. As in a number of his other poetic portraits, Scott isolates a moment in time, employing in this case the present tense, and concentrates on the suffering that the individual half-breed girl experiences:

She covers her face with her blanket,
  Her fierce soul hates her breath,
As it cries with a sudden passion
  For life or death. (Poems, p. 56)

In this portrait, the girl becomes a symbol of an incomplete historical transition and, for this purpose, Scott uses the kind of racial typing which is at times irritatingly familiar in some of his other works: Scots tend to have trouble expressing their emotions, but are hard workers; Indians are often indolent and superstitious; French-Canadians are somewhat naive concerning the larger world, but possess quaint customs. In "The Half-Breed Girl," the spirit of a distinctive racial heritage is strong enough to awaken responses which the girl only confusedly recognizes: "The smell of the dripping net-twine/ Gives to her heart a wish." Similarly, she somehow apprehends vestiges of a Scottish past,

But she cannot learn the meaning
  Of the shadows in her soul,
The lights that break and gather,
  The clouds that part and roll,

The reek of rock-built cities,
  Where her fathers dwelt of yore,
The gleam of loch and shealing,
  The mist on the moor. . . . (Poems, p. 55)

Much of the power of the poem is dependent upon the fact that the girl is blameless in her suffering; her anguish is heightened because she does not even understand the origins of her present condition.

The portrait of a tragic innocence is heightened in "The Onondaga Madonna," a work which reflects Scott's interest in painting and his sentimental feelings for children. The poem pictures a half-breed woman with a baby, who is himself a product of a mixed race coupling. A strongly ironic image is created as Scott alters the conventional artistic subject of the Virgin and Child by describing the baby as being the "latest promise of her nation's doom." Within the ironic boundaries of the poem, the child is drawn to the two sources of his past:

> Paler than she her baby clings and lies,
> The primal warrior gleaming from his eyes;
> He sulks, and burdened with his infant gloom,
> He draws his heavy brows and will not rest. (Poems, p. 230)

There is an element of determinism in these portraits of people caught in a life that is not one of their choosing. Perhaps, through the examples of these symbolic lives, Scott was offering an exception to his general conviction that life necessitated taking responsibility for the moral implications of one's actions. The exception is stated more clearly in Scott's untitled novel when, after revealing the hypocrisy and near-sightedness of some of his characters, the author observes:

> Yet . . . these souls knew no more than their due share of responsibilities. Blame is not an ingredient of judgment. We mortals deal that and praise with precision. But the calm powers that winnow, sift, measure, weigh, with dispassionate exactitude, give to each human account in the book of life its due charge, without remorse, and also without smiles or tears. (Novel, p. 290)

Relative freedom from guilt is, however, something which only children possess in Scott's writing; adults such as the old woman in "Watkwenies" often choose ways of seeing which contribute to their suffering.

The central irony in "Watkwenies" is created by the passage of time and is immediately suggested by the title which means The Woman Who Conquers. The first eight lines of the sonnet are set in the past and show that in her youth the woman took an active part in her people's fight against the white race. The scene is violent, but attests to her dignity and independence. Her conquest was hollow, though, as is evident from the last six lines of the poem, where Scott depicts the woman's present situation:

> Now clothed with many an ancient flap and fold,
> And wrinkled like an apple kept till May,
> She weighs the interest-money in her palm,
> And, when the Agent calls her valiant name,
> Hears, like the war-whoops of her perished day,
> The lads playing snow-snake in the stinging cold.
> (Poems, p. 230)

Time has made Watkwenies dependent upon her old enemy, the white man, and her humiliation only precedes what will be, Scott believes, the final assimilation of her people. This transformation is foreshadowed by the children who would have grown to become warriors in her earlier days but now play games that are mere echoes of former raids. However, while the artificial separation of the poem into parts that deal with the past and the present reflects the poet's perception of the contrast as one which elicits sadness and sympathy, an important aspect of the poem concerns Watkwenies' perception of herself and her people. The sadness of the situation is heightened for the reader who, realizing that Watkwenies herself juxtaposes the sounds of her past and her present, senses how helpless she must feel in the face of change. And yet, it is this very unwillingness to accept change which makes Watkwenies partly responsible for the suffering she experiences, as Scott shows in other works with other characters. The desire to maintain and live in the experience of recollected moments, he believes, prevents the self from living fully in the present.

The essential duality of Scott's vision concerning the Indian results because he sensed the loss and tragedy in a figure such as the woman Watkwenies while feeling that the process of historical change was not only irresistible, but right. Efforts to suspend or otherwise contravene the process were futile and had the effect of damming up enormous forces which eventually would be released in what was, philosophically speaking, a storm. Storms, with their thunder, lightning and lashing rain, are familiar symbolic entities in Scott's work, but he ie perhaps nowhere as clear in the use of this symbolism as in the poem "Powassan's Drum."

Though readers of "Powassan's Drum" appreciate the drama Scott creates, they appear confused over the purpose of the poem. Fred Cogswell senses the obvious "apocalyptic climax" in the work but sees in Powassan a representational quality that simply is not present. The medicine man, Cogswell asserts, is a model for the alienated artist in society because, like the artist, he was a man feared by the tribe for his physical deformities and his awesome spiritual powers:

> The vision, then, is both Powassan's revenge on his own tribe for his physical inferiority and an assertion of his own superiority, through magic. As such, it is psychologically appropriate.[5]

The appropriateness, psychological or otherwise, is perhaps consistent if one assumes a correlation between Powassan and the Piper in "The Piper of

Arll," which Cogswell's introduction to the article suggests, but Scott clearly did not have such a comparison in mind when he was writing the poem. An entry in Scott's James Bay diary, kept during the 1905-1906 expedition, records a confrontation between himself and a medicine man named Powassan who was conducting spirit dances. Scott, investigating a complaint made by the local Indian agent, spoke with Powassan and, in his own words, "warned the Indians not to dance."[6] Medicine dances, he believed, were a return to old tribal ways based on superstition, and hindered Indian development. Tom Marshall understands better than Cogswell the specific nature of the poem with regard to the Indian situation when he says that the headless Indian suggests "primitive instinct separated from reason."[7] But Marshall mistakenly says that Scott somehow feels a sympathy for the figures in the poem:

> Here, Scott seems fully aware of the resentment and hatred felt by the Indian for the forces destroying his world. His magic is insufficient to prevent the tragedy.[8]

With other of his Indian poems, it is possible to say that Scott sees the characters as being tragic, but his purpose in this poem is to illustrate as clearly as possible the dangers of instinct governed by irrationality, and therefore the two figures in "Powassan's Drum" emerge as forms of incarnate evil.

Powassan occupies the same moral ground as the anonymous forces in "The Harvest" who, through the perversion of natural orders, had attempted to frustrate the progression of social development. He is a negative force who has at his disposal hatred and superstition, two means that Scott believes may hinder plans to bring the Indian into the modern, Europeanized world. Powassan is a formidable threat, as he is able to conjure a demi-world:

> He crouches in his dwarf wigwam
> Wizened with fasting,
> Fierce with thirst,
> Making great medicine
> In memory of hated things dead
> Or in menace of hated things to come,
> And the universe listens
> To the throb--throb--throb--throb--
> Throbbing of Powassan's Drum. (Poems, p. 59)

By no means a foolish, ineffectual figure, Powassan is able to make the universe listen and the repetition of the sound of the drum throughout the poem suggests the creation of a hypnotic state. Powassan's immediate universe is his tribe. Scott is not sure if the medicine man wishes to pose any specific threat, but his white moral sensibility rejects the incantations on the grounds of irrationality. The medicine man called Powassan, in Scott's view, offers only one part of a duality to his people: blind hatred. There is no resolution in the poem into a beautified state, no sense of the other part of the duality which is love:

> Is it the memory of hated things dead
> That he beats--famished--
> Or a menace of hated things to come
> That he beats--parched with anger
> And famished with hatred--? (Poems, p. 61)

The passion described is all-consuming, stretching from the past to the future; such hatred is an obsession that knows no place in the realm of human reason and prevents the progress that leads to order. The ideal world, where people and historical events progress harmoniously, is one which has rationality, as well as love, at its center. The world Powassan conjures is completely irrational and represented by the figure of the headless Indian.

Summoned by the relentless power of Powassan's drumbeats, the ghostly Indian rises out of a depth of horror, both visual and psychological. He comes in nocturnal mystery:

> A shadow noiseless,
> A canoe moves noiseless as sleep,
> Noiseless as the trance of deep sleep. . . . (Poems, p. 62)

The reference to sleep is made four times as the spectre is introduced; the repetition reminds the reader that this creature does come from a deep sleep--the sleep of the reasoning mind. In fact, the horror that Scott creates through visual detail is reminiscent of a series of pictures by the Spaniard Francisco Goya, one of which is titled "The Sleep of Reason Begets Monsters." In Goya's engraving, fantastic monsters are seen flying above the head of a sleeping man and, in a similar fashion, Scott shows that the trance induced by Powassan releases a monster of irrationality. Though the Indian figure is literally headless, Scott makes it clear that the image points to a symbolic loss of reasoning thought. The Indian sits "modelled in full power,/ Haughty in manful power,/ Headless and impotent in power" (Poems, p. 62). The power of this image is real: the superstitious appeal of magical conjuring, coupled with the recreated image of former Indian greatness, has the strength to draw others to it. But, ironically, the power is directionless and impotent because it has no application beyond the simple statement of rage. As such, the power of the headless Indian and, by association, the power of Powassan, have their most direct correlative in the storm which gathers force throughout the development of the poem. Scott makes the correlation quite clear in a section which employs powerful visual images and directs the reader's eye along lines which define the relationships between the Indian figure and the world:

> The Indian fixed like bronze
> Trails his severed head
> Through the dead water
> Holding it by the hair,
> By the plaits of hair,
> Wound with sweet grass and tags of silver.
> The face looks through the water
> Up to its throne on the shoulders of power,
> Unquenched eyes burning in the water,
> Piercing beyond the shoulders of power
> Up to the fingers of the storm cloud. (Poems, p. 62)

The Indian, formerly described as a "statue," is again described in inanimate terms, "fixed like bronze," and is shown trailing his hair through "the dead water." The heavy inertia of metal is coupled with the image of travel through a lifeless element, while the head is held by the most tenuous of links to the body, hair. At the risk of sounding pedantic, I would like to point out that even the small tags of silver contribute to the tone Scott wishes to maintain in the poem. In a short story, "Charcoal," he mentions the way the philandering Bad-young-man dresses in "barbaric trappings, his hair full of brass pistol cartridges and the tin trademarks from tobacco plugs" (CA, p. 212). Bad-young-man's manner of dress is gaudy and vain, but more important from Scott's point of view is the fact that the warrior is proof that the Indian way of life, even down to mundane matters such as dress, is undeniably altered by exposure to white society. In "Powassan's Drum," the headless Indian's appearance is not without this ironic reminder.

The eyes of Powassan's Indian, presumably "unquenched" because they are fed by hatred, look up and past the natural seat upon the shoulders of the body to the storm cloud where they find a present affinity. The line of "viewless hate" is clearly drawn, and when the question is again asked, "Is this the meaning of the magic . . . ?" the answer must be 'yes.' Powassan's 'vision' represents an impossible return to a dead way of life: he succeeds only in creating an illusion of power based on memories of former Indian greatness. The line of viewless sight from the severed head suggests that Powassan's counsel can only lead to the destruction of the storm, as the irresistible forces of history break upon his people. The suppression of growth and development results in the "murdered shadow" of Indian dignity being wiped from the earth. The concluding section of the poem must be read with a certain ironic appreciation because, though the sound of Powassan's Drum "lives" at the center of the storm, the "dark world" is nevertheless being crushed in a "wild vortex" of wind, hail and lightning. The triumph of Powassan is one of hatred and, finally, one of death for him and his people. Hatred, and a call for the resurrection of old and dead ways, merely ensures the violent destruction of the things he hoped to preserve.

Clearly, Scott saw the confrontation of Indian and white cultures as constituting a major challenge for contemporary Indians, but he did not believe that the dominant white culture was itself immune from challenge simply because it possessed strength. True, if the Indian Department's plan of eventual assimilation for the Indian had run an ideal course, Scott might never have bothered to question the appropriateness of his society's standards as cultural goals. But in works such as "On the Way to the Mission" Scott reveals a deep mistrust of his fellow whites and their ability to provide models of value and behavior. Unchecked, the white man would cheat and corrupt the Indians, leaving them in an even worse condition than before their exposure to European civilization.

Needed, Scott thought, was a standard that was above the limitations posed by individual or social failing. One such standard was religion, and Scott turned to this subject with great concentration, though critics generally have not discussed this aspect of his work. The religious tradition Scott knew most about, and the one which had made its influence forceably felt among the Indians was the Christian one. His treatment of Christianity is of an inquiring nature, which has caused Roy Daniells to conclude that the poet had "an unfocussed Christian outlook."[9] To be "unfocussed" is evidently to be flawed, but Daniells does not see that Scott was treating religion the way he treated other phenomena such as cultural transition; that is, as a problem in historical process. Christianity, Scott concluded, was as doomed as a form as was the Indian way of life and was, in his own time, already an anachronistic dogma.

In a poem written in 1899, "The Mission of the Trees," Scott shows a willingness to overlook the conflicts of religious and cultural differences in order to use Christian legend for romantic literary purposes. The poem is set in an indefinite past and recreates the legend told of two Indians, Mizigun and his son Matenack, and their profession of Christian faith in opposition to the hostility of fellow tribal members. The tribe is undergoing great hardship during a harsh winter as the poem opens, and Scott insinuates that this is because the tribe has left the "hollow/ Quiet in the solitude" (Poems, p. 309) of the Mission for their old ways of wandering and hunting. For Scott, who believed that the stereotypical picture of happy aboriginal life was a fallacy of European sentimentalists, the abandonment of the Mission was a symbolic regression into savagery. Only two members of the tribe, the father and his son, desire to return, though this means enduring the fury of the "pagans." The two men leave the tribe and, in an attempt to return to the Mission, die of exposure and starvation. In later years, the place of their death becomes spiritually symbolic, a "mission" with a ghostly presence.

Though the two Indians are given the poet's initial attention, their presence in the poem is finally only important because their death consecrates a place in the woods. The final third of the poem details the effects and power of this individual sacrifice, without ever again mentioning Mizigun and Matenack. It is significant that Scott attributes the source of the tale to anonymous "story-makers," a device which effectively distances the action of the poem and allows the straightforward tone of Christian myth to function unimpeded. Missing is the ironic commentary upon Christian belief present in other, later, poems such as "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon" (1905) and "A Scene at Lake Manitou" (1935).

Scott's earlier avoidance of explicit criticism of Christian belief and practice likely had two causes, the first being an awareness of, if not a reaction to, the religiously conservative nature of his Canadian reading public. He had ample opportunity to be familiar with this conservatism, especially since he had witnessed the furor that arose over Wilfred Campbell's article for the Toronto Globe on 27 February 1892. Campbell had proposed a mythological interpretation of certain Biblical stories and subsequently found himself the target of angry readers' letters and of the public censure of the Globe's editor.[10] Scott may have learned the advantages of caution from this incident but, as my study of his changing religious and philosophical ideas in Chapter III shows, his refusal to break completely with tradition meant that any criticism of Christianity would have to show that certain timeless essences were preserved in an evolution of ideas. It is this kind of carefully qualified criticism which appears in "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon."

Explication of the Lake Nipigon poem can be a complicated and confusing enterprise, partly because Scott was not consistent in his organization of the signification of the principal elements of conflict. Simply stated, the theme of the work concerns the tension between Christianity's moribund forms and its eternal essence, which seeks renewal in change. Scott uses a storm as a symbol of the destructive forces released when traditional forms resist evolutionary changes; likewise, he employs the hymn as a symbol of the valued, but increasingly ineffectual tradition. However, Scott chooses not to provide symbolic representation to convey the implicit vitality of faith, calling this quality an eternal "soul," and the result is a structural inconsistency which does not clarify the symbolic importance of either the storm or the hymns. Subsequently, the reader can easily, and mistakenly, believe that the poem is centrally about other issues, such as the Indian or nature, an error which is evident in an article by Roy Daniells.

Daniells is ill at ease with what he believes is the indefinite quality of Scott's poetry in general, and his interpretation of "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon" reveals how he attempts to force an order upon the poem:

> Nowhere do we see more clearly the dominant role which wild nature plays in Scott's imagination and what might be called its power of absorption. The irony of his Indians, whose way of life is doomed, being nevertheless in some sense joyful and triumphant--this irony is never expanded. Nor is the resolution of conflicting emotions ever made explicit. Instead we have the storm itself, by its own return to peace and calm, providing a conclusion.[11]

Daniells is understandably puzzled by the irony he finds, simply because his "joyful and triumphant" Indians do not exist in the poem. A group of whites and Indians are depicted in a canoe on a lake, and as they sing hymns a dark storm overtakes them. The only reference to the Indians is with regard to the sound of their voices mingling with those of the white men; the latter "Now are married with the long-drawn Ojibwa/ Uncouth and mournful" (Poems, p. 24). The voices suggest neither joy nor triumph; rather, they evidence a pathetic ignorance of the content of the hymn.

It is easy to see where Daniells found the joy and triumph of Scott's Indians, because the hymn Adeste Fideles opens with the lines "Adeste, fideles,/ Laeti, triumphantes" (O come, all ye faithful,/ Joyful and triumphant). Daniells misses the fact which must have struck Scott with all the clarity of the lightning he watched from his canoe on the lake: not only do the Indians not understand the words they sing, but they are unable to experience the celebratory mood of the hymn. The insight goes beyond the limited understanding of the Indians, for they are merely characters illustrating a general condition. In fact, whites and Indians alike are hardly more than disembodied voices, as characters are not named or identified in any way. The Indians simply illustrate to an extreme degree what is true of Christianity generally, in Scott's view: that is, that there is a disjunction between the spirit of, and the manifestations and practices of, the faith.

The failure of the Indians to capture the mood of the hymn is one small but very clear signal to guide the reader to an accurate reading of a poem which is unified in its use of symbolic images. Daniells, because he has missed the irony behind this signal, ignores what he reads and interprets the poem according to evidence found in other poems by Scott. He says that the poem ends in a peace and calm, but he must have been thinking of a work such as "At Gull Lake: August, 1810," which does end with nature's encompassing calm. "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon" leaves the reader with the sights and sounds of violent upheaval:

> Back they [the hymnal phrases] falter as the deep
>   storm overtakes them,
> Whelms them in splendid hollows of booming thunder,
> Wraps them in rain, that sweeping, breaks and onrushes
>   Ringing like cymbals. (Poems, p. 24)

The impression Scott wishes to create is that of a moment of breaking energy, the release of pent-up forces which rush upon the sensibilities of the reader in much the same way as the storm breaks upon the occupants of the canoe. Calm may indeed be deduced as following the sweeping rain, but Scott purposefully ended the work with the action of the storm ongoing because he wished to have the natural elements provide a symbolic commentary upon the pictured scene.

All elements of the poem contribute to a sense of historical conditions building symbolically to a climax. The first stanza frames the hymns according to time, place and a mode of perception, and acts as a guide to the way in which the work is to be read. The initial phrase "Here in the midnight" replaces the usual preposition 'at' with 'in' and suggests that midnight should be seen both in terms of time and place. Given the fact that Scott is writing in the present tense and that the poem goes on to establish an historical context for the hymns, the setting of the time at midnight implies that the moment is a crucial midpoint between different states, between a kind of night and a new day. For Christian man, Scott intends to show, it is also a transitional region of religious awareness, after the death of outworn forms of belief and before the dawning of a vital faith. It is a time, both for the canoeists and for spiritual man, of few guidelines as the journey between mainland and island is dominated by shadows and distinguished only by other shadows "deeper, profounder." The mood of the poem is captured by the water, which, though it is being used as a means of movement, suggests a false action or a stasis because it is "dead." Scott momentarily reserves any suggestion of movement as he wishes to create a sense of expectancy for the force, or storm, which must appear. Admittedly the water "whispers," but the poet has not yet introduced the canoe and the whispering sound seems to arise from the dead element, the water.

In the next three stanzas, Scott shifts from the symbolic mode to historical commentary, to clarify the parallel between the natural scene and his theoretical assertions regarding faith and time. He creates a panorama of the development of Judeo-Christian belief, from earliest times when it "brooded in darkness," through the days of Latin influence, to the present time when the ancient sounds are awkwardly joined with the pronunciations of an unknowing tongue. The entire span of Christian history is brought to an imperfect present form, to a moment when, like the dove simile introduced later in the poem, it is unable to go forward, unable to do more than falter back into a silence. But, Scott believes, when man and his expressions fail to meet the demands of growth and change, the very sweep of history will overwhelm the old forms and introduce conditions favorable to new expressions of basic truths. The ancient hymns, after all, have a soul that is "eternal."

Though he wants to believe that there is a timeless and immutable spirit in Christian faith, Scott is nevertheless determined in this poem to show that even the most cherished forms and expressions of that faith, such as the hymns sung by the canoeists, may cease to be vital. Scott captures the failed character of the hymns by likening each cadence to a dove, which, like an inversion of Noah's dove, flies "from her shelter/ Deep in the shadow" but always fails, always returns to "nest in silence" (Poems, p. 24). The voyage is repeated, but the image must always falter, until the hymns are finally obliterated by the approaching storm. Scott creates an anticipatory mood for the correction of this sense of failure because, although the hymns by themselves are "Bound" and doomed to die into silence and absence, "All wild nature stirs with the infinite, tender/ Plaint of a bygone age whose soul is eternal" (Poems, p. 24). Ironically becoming a complaint or lamentation against their current misuse, the hymns stir nature's elements, in the form of a storm, to angry activity.

Symbolically, the storm is an agent of necessity, arising out of terms defined by Scott's sense of historical progression. In direct antithetical contrast to the images of the first stanza, the storm is immediately recognized in terms of movement and influence:

> Thunder is travelling slow on the path of the lightning;
> One after one the stars and the beaming planets
> Look serene in the lake from the edge of the storm cloud,
> Then have they vanished. (Poems, p. 23)

In contrast to the sensation of stasis created by the environment surrounding the hymns in the first stanza, these second four lines suggest a gathering, irresistible force which is cosmic and lacking in any hint of a human presence. In the path of the powerful storm, even the stars and planets vanish from sight; things that look "serene" and permanent are eclipsed in this second passage. Confronted with the inexorable forces of time and change, man and his valued utterances are reduced to silence, as is shown in the third stanza when the canoe "floats dumb." The canoe momentarily "Gathers her voice" in the form of the hymns, but the effect of this assertion is short-lived as all evidence of her presence on the landscape "Lapses in blackness."

In the final section of the poem, the storm is again seen together with man and his hymn:

> Back they falter as the deep storm overtakes them,
> Whelms them in splendid hollows of booming thunder,
> Wraps them in rain, that, sweeping, breaks and onrushes
> Ringing like cymbals. (Poems, p. 24)

Two conditions emerge as the storm overtakes the hymns: the human sound falters a last time, and is lost in the sweep of elements but, simultaneously, the singing is wrapped or clothed in rain, which is a contrast to the lifeless waters of the lake. The rain is a vigorous force which somehow, in the midst of the storm's destructiveness, protects something vital. The storm, symbolic of the forces of time and progression, destroys the existing formal elements of faith, while making possible the renewed expression of that faith.

If Scott intended to leave his reader with a message of hope in the last lines of "Lake Nipigon," through the image of an essence safely enclosed in nature's life-giving rains, then he must be seen as having failed simply because the effects of the destructive storm are so overwhelming and final. Such a failure is, however, entirely consistent, given his belief in the necessity of historical change and the dangers inherent in any attempt to ignore this necessity. The need to warn some Christians against the threats posed by moribund forms outweighed, at least in this poem, the need to remind readers that an essence did still exist, and there is proof that Scott discovered that he himself had been guilty of using old and tired expressions to achieve a convenient, though sentimentalized, effect in "The Mission of the Trees."

"Scene at Lake Manitou," a relatively late poem (it was written in 1933), presents a more explicit criticism of Christianity and its proselytizing adherents than does "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon." Several details indicate that Scott was consciously creating in "A Scene at Lake Manitou" a realistic contrast to the sentimentality of the earlier "The Mission of the Trees." Both works deal with Indian response to Christian belief, both picture the death of a son (spelled Matenack in "Mission" and Matanack in "Manitou") and the implications his death have for other Christians. Beyond these surface similarities, however, the aspects of the two works become dramatically contradictory. Where the Indian characters in the earlier poem were subsumed to a narrative largely devoted to retelling a legend of supernatural events, the feelings of the Indian mother in "Manitou" are of great importance, and Christian faith, treated in a very critical manner by the poet, is seen as contributing to the woman's suffering. As in "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon," Scott is isolating a crucial moment in the history of thought and behavior but, in this case, specific human experience receives as much attention as the questions involving the historical process of faith.

The first long section of descriptive detail in the poem captures the mother's perceptions of her immediate world as she watches over her son's death. The sounds of nearby children playing, the heat of the day, the visual impressions of the landscape--all culminate in the subjective vision of the Widow Frederick, whose Indian name is Stormy Sky:

> She gazed at the far-off islands
> That seemed in a mirage to float
> Moored in the sultry air.
> She had ceased to hear the breath in Matanack's throat
> Or the joy of the children gathering the hay.
> Death, so near, had taken all sound from the day,
> And she sat like one that grieves
> Unconscious of grief. (GC, p. 49)

Scott creates in Stormy Sky a vision of grief so consuming that the sense impressions which define consciousness are drastically altered or even absent. Her emotional state is like a vacuum ready for the introduction of informing content: her thoughts wander to the past, to fond recollections of Matanack's youth and, intermingled with these, to contradictory religious musings:

> Mingled with thoughts of Nanabojou
> And the powerful Manitou
> That lived in the lake;
> Mingled with thoughts of Jesus
> Who raised a man from the dead,
> So Father Pacifique said. (GC, p. 50)

The naive commingling of two religious viewpoints is marked by one common element: Stormy Sky takes from her pagan and Christian stores of belief a pragmatic, literal interpretation which allows her, however desperately, to believe that she can rescue her son from death. It is at this point in the poem that the reader must choose between two paths of interpretation. The first sees Scott creating a touching narrative about the failure of the Indian to abandon pagan belief in favor of an enlightened, modern faith, Christianity. This interpretation is possible only if certain ironies of tone and groups of imagery in the poem are ignored. The more accurate direction of interpretation recognizes that Scott was criticizing Christianity's spokesmen, in this case the missionaries, who had perverted the essence of faith by emphasizing literal dogmatism. Stormy Sky believes the story of resurrection in a literal way, on the strength of the priest's assertion, but she obviously has no grasp of the figurative importance of the miracle. For her, the rising of Lazarus from the dead and the spiritual resurrection implied through the use of Holy Water and Scapular are both to be accepted in the realm of earthly possibility:

To save him, to keep him forever!
She had prayed to their Jesus,
She had called on Mary His mother
To save him, to keep him forever! (GC, p. 50)

Scott, thanks to his Victorian background, knew that something in Christianity had failed, but for him that something was not the essence or spirit "whose soul is eternal," as he had discovered at Lake Nipigon. The failure could be traced to those who wished to deny that the forms of religion, like the forms of all other things, were subject to the processes of change. One of these Christian reactionaries is the Reverend Enoch Underwood, who appears in the Untitled Novel (1905). In a passage which may be considered rare because Scott seems to be sharing his own feelings on the subject of Christianity, Underwood is described as a man who

> was nothing if not orthodox, and at a time when free discussion was leavening the whole tough mass of dogma and invigorating and sweetening the air in the musty chambers of evangelicism he remained dull and insensible in a sort of comatose opposition, ignorant of the new ideas, believing them to be devilish and damnable. (Novel, p. 80)

The spirit of Christianity has been replaced by sterile dogma and rigid literalism, and Scott shows, through the person of Stormy Sky, how the narrowness of such a vision can create more suffering than consolation. Her frenzied sacrifice of goods, thrown into the lake, is prompted by an utterly futile belief that her son may be, literally, saved from death. Her final conviction that her son has gone "To hunt in the Spirit Land/ And to be with Jesus and Mary" is mere emotional reflex caused by an exhaustion of hope. Her real peace is in resignation, the willed surrender of desire. This stoical acceptance gives her character dignity, but she is also tragic because she has been the victim of her own limited understanding and the unenlightened teachings of Christian missionaries.

Part of Stormy Sky's importance as a character lies in her development as a psychological entity struggling with personal confusion and loss, but Scott also assigns her a role as a representative figure. The name Stormy Sky brings to mind the other, symbolic, storms in Scott's writing, and like her natural counterparts the woman announces the cataclysmic unleashing of historical forces. Stormy Sky's personal experience reveals the failure of her native and new-found beliefs to act as sources of solace; on a universal level, the events that unfold at Lake Manitou also show that the traditional structures of belief would continue to resist change until swept away by revolutionary thought. Scott renders this theory symbolically, in the form of changing perceptions of the landscape, through the eyes of the grieving Indian mother.

In the opening lines of the poem, islands are described in heightened hues of color and the water of the lake appears gem-like. The entire aspect of the day, as Stormy Sky nears her emotional moment of appeal to pagan and Christian spirits, is dreamy:

> She gazed at the far-off islands
> That seemed in a mirage to float
> Moored in the sultry air. (GC, p. 49)

Stormy Sky has yet to witness the reality of her son's death; she still lives in an innocent state of religious faith. Loss and disappointment are imminent, but for the moment all life and awareness seem suspended in timelessness, like so many floating islands.

After her son's death, Stormy Sky sees the landscape at day's end quite differently:

The late August air was cold
With a presage of frost.
The islands had lost
Their mirage-mooring in air
And lay dark on the burnished water
Against the sunset flare--
Standing ruins of blackened spires
Charred by the fury of fires
That had passed that way,
That were smouldering and dying out in the West
At the end of the day. (GC, pp. 52-53)

Scott accomplishes several things in this concluding passage. First, he reinforces the general mood of loss through references to the chill of the day, the darkened shades of physical objects, and the dying light of the setting sun. Second, he indicates that perception, as well as mood, has changed. The islands appear stripped of their mirage-moorings and lie in the water like so many formless mounds and, in a similar way, Stormy Sky's impossible hopes have been brought low, made to lie in the still waters of painful reality.

But most importantly, Scott switches from a descriptive to a metaphorical mode, signalled by the use of the dash after the line "Against the sunset flare." Island trees become "blackened spires" and for visual impact the image is effective, but Scott rarely writes for simple effect, preferring instead to load his language with as much connotative value as possible. In choosing the word "spires" the poet employs a synecdoche most appropriate to his theme of religious criticism: spires remind the reader of churches and cathedrals, which in turn are the physical embodiments of all that is established and static in Christianity. By describing the spires as blackened and charred, Scott turns the reader's vision to the larger context of historical progression: just as sunlight has illuminated the personal drama at Lake Manitou, so has the scorching light of historical awakening swept through Western religion, leaving behind destroyed illusions. Stormy Sky and Western civilization have both experienced crises of faith, and faith itself has been drastically altered in the process.

"A Scene at Lake Manitou" was published late in Scott's career as a writer (in 1935) and is an interesting culmination of interests, revealing that he had not been unaffected by the period of Victorian social, religious and literary changes. He was aware, for instance, that even in his own area of Indian administration some theories (like the one behind the Indian farm program) had failed, as is hinted at by the scene of haphazard harvesting in the poem. Religious faith, so important to Scott, is also severely scrutinized in the work and certain formalistic aspects of Christianity are rejected as being moribund. Yet Scott does not reject the concept of Godhead, and, in other works of confirmation, he demonstrates what this idea of God is and how it relates to certain traditional aspects of Christianity. Finally, the poem set at Lake Manitou reveals Scott's growing interest in psychology and behavior. What makes the poem interesting is that it achieves what is usually found only in his stories, a characterization dependent upon internal motivation and a reaction to the environment rather than upon the dictates of poetic convention. Only Watkwenies and the old woman in "The Forsaken" join Stormy Sky in acquiring the kind of realistic psychological depth critics usually associate with Scott's fictional characters.

The differences between prose fiction and poetry were not merely external and physical for D. C. Scott, who saw one form possessing more appropriate claim to certain human concerns than the other. It is in his fiction that "Social, psychological, and moral tensions hold our attention. Nature's impact on consciousness, and human response to natural force are of secondary interest only."[12] Although he saw himself primarily as a poet, Scott was also drawn to contemporary interests in fiction:

> Scott was open to the post-Victorian influences that led Joyce and Lawrence from the realm of physical action into the movements of the subconscious: these stories [by Scott], for all their violence and virility, are more concerned with the neurotic pressures of the inner life than with overt resolution in action.[13]

An obvious thematic ground of comparison, involving the conflicts of cultural change, exists between Scott's Indian poems and stories. The majority of the poems are from an objective point of view, and though the suffering of a figure like Watkwenies is apparent, it is made evident through external evidence such as the juxtaposing of the settings of her present and former selves. An early story such as "Charcoal" is an example of the transition from the objectivity of poetic viewpoint Scott usually employs to the more subjective rendering of later prose works.

Scott claimed that he had patterned the story "Charcoal" as closely as possible on actual events that took place in Alberta in 1896 and, with the exception of one major detail, his claim is supported by a subsequent historical study entitled Charcoal's World by Hugh Dempsey.[14] Charcoal was a Blood Reserve Indian who murdered his wife's lover and became the object of a celebrated manhunt. During his escape he killed a policeman and was finally captured and hanged. The exception to historical veracity occurs when Scott describes the murder of Bad-young-man, the wife's lover. Records show that Charcoal discovered his wife Pretty Face with her lover and shot Bad-young-man while the two were still having intercourse. Scott, doubtless to avoid public censure, merely has

Charcoal kill his rival while the two meet in a forest. Except for this slight deviation, "Charcoal" sticks to original recorded facts and becomes, like so many of the Indian poems, a study of one individual trapped in a disjunction of cultural values and perceptions.

The plot of the story is familiar to readers of Scott's poems: an Indian, who is drawn to white man's ways, is still bound by his tribal heritage of beliefs and, in an ensuing dilemma of moral choices, is crushed by inhospitable circumstances. Charcoal is a character caught in the transition of time and society and does not seem free to attain happiness. The plot has many points in common with poems of the same subject, but Scott's method of treating the social problem is decidedly different, as is immediately seen in the opening paragraph:

> Pretty-face had promised to behave herself once more. But this time she promised in a different way, and her husband, Charcoal, was satisfied, which he had not always been before. Charcoal wanted to be what his agent called "a good Indian". He wanted to have a new cooking stove, and a looking-glass. He already had cattle on loan, and was one of the best workers in the hay fields. (CA, p. 212)

Along with the establishment of jealous conflict in the first sentence, Scott offers the reader a problem in ambiguity with the italicized phrase "a good Indian." The phrase raises the question of relative values in a way which the poems rarely did, by giving an unmistakably ironic suggestiveness to a concept which Scott and his Department seemed to share with equal enthusiasm. Material possessions and agrarian activities were thought to be signs that the Indian was learning the ways and values of white society, was becoming a pliant member of the dominant culture. The satirical edge is admittedly fine in this passage, and Scott does not expand upon the emphasis he gives the phrase, other than to repeat it later, but the intended ambiguity is in keeping with the confusion that Scott tries to reveal in Charcoal's mind.

According to white man's law, Charcoal has committed an obvious crime and must be punished, but Scott creates empathy by showing Charcoal as being genuinely confused by the world in which he lives. At one point in the story, when Charcoal seems to be successfully entering the white man's world by hard work and obedience, he is convinced that "the white man's ways were the best" (CA, p. 213). Soon after, however, when frustrated by his wife's behavior and threatened by a loss of prestige, he is equally convinced that "the old way was a good way." The confusion within Charcoal grows evenly with his confused position between Indian and white cultures. He becomes an exile from both, running until he is finally betrayed into the hands of the police by Wolf-plume, a relative. Charcoal's life is, finally, pathetic; there is nothing he can possibly do to come to terms with the problem of living between two worlds:

> He had thought of many things which he did not understand. He was to be killed in the white man's manner; to his mind it was only vengeance, death for deaths, which the warriors of his own race dealt to their foes in the old days, and in a braver fashion. They had driven away the buffalo, and made the Indian sad with flour and beef, and had put his muscles into harness. He had only shot a bad Indian, and they rose upon him. His gun had shot a big policeman, and when they had taught his brother-in-law their own idea of fair dealing he was taken in sleep, and now there was to be an end. He did not know what Père Pauquette meant by his prayers, and the presentation of the little crucifix worn bright with many salutations. It was all involved in mystery. (CA, p. 221)

The "mystery" Scott describes is one which the reader to some extent shares with Charcoal, since the author presents a moral dilemma which goes unresolved: the reader is able to understand Charcoal's confusion since only cultural circumstance seems to determine that the Indian's act of murder is bad while the ritualistic murder by society is good.

Because Scott had shown in his poems and his official writings a belief that individuals will regrettably suffer in order that historical processes will find fulfillment, he might be seen as taking an objective view of Charcoal, leaving the reader to make the best of a problematic and frustrating reading experience. Charcoal, after all, does die in a dignified manner, with "the calm of the stoic" (CA, p. 222). But even this phrase presents difficulties because his form of stoicism bears little similarity to classical versions of the philosophy associated with writers such as Marcus Aurelius, and even less to concepts of Christian humility; Charcoal dies peacefully because he takes solace from the lingering scents of his medicine bag, another remnant of the archaic cultural beliefs Scott so obviously felt were detrimental to the Indian.

The short story "Charcoal" occupies a transitional middle ground in Scott's moral literature. Charcoal is, like his counterparts in the poetry, an individual caught in an historical process but, unlike Watkwenies for example, he achieves a presence that owes as much to the complexity of his attempts to deal with his environment as to his capacity as a representative tragic character. Though he fails, he emerges as something more than a tableau figure. Yet "Charcoal" is a story informed by Scott's sense of history: characters move by necessity to forces they do not understand, to the dictates of a universal scenario which overshadows the importance of individual decisions. It is in other stories, such as "Clute Boulay," that Scott delves deeper into individual psychology and creates a moral universe in miniature, one which shows the essence of human nature defined by instances of choice.

With stories such as "Tête-Jaune" (1939) and "Clute Boulay"

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(1934), Scott employs the familiar situation of white and Indian racial mixture and the cultural tensions that result, but he emphasizes the intricacies of character more than the conflict of general social forces. Giose Rimanelli is among those critics who have recognized that Scott was doing something in fiction that was unique in Canada at the time:

> The first Canadian to step out of the common provincial attitude of his contemporaries, and to concern himself with what writers in Europe and America were doing in his time, was Duncan Campbell Scott.[15]

Desmond Pacey had said much the same thing when he observed that no Canadian writer previously had shown much concern for "the finer points of technique which were so avidly discussed in Paris and London."[16] Though the observations by Pacey and Rimanelli do direct needed attention to the fact that Scott was somehow different and possibly better than his predecessors and contemporaries, nothing specific is being pinpointed. The reason, perhaps, is that Scott was writing material not clearly realistic, naturalistic, romantic, or anything else so readily described in a set tradition, though elements of each of these certainly seem evident.

A term which proves helpful in the analysis of a work such as "Tête-Jaune" (1939) is moral realism. Glenn Clever discusses what Scott might have meant when saying that literature "anticipates social progress in terms of ideality" (DCS, p. 19) and concludes that reality was not expressed by either the photographic realism of an Arnold Bennett nor the reportorial realism of an Ernest Hemingway. Clever may not be thorough in his discussion of these kinds of realism, but he is of assistance when he says that Scott was concerned with another kind of creative standard:

> Disregarding photographic realism, and not much concerned with reportorial realism, in either setting or character, he tries for moral realism--to express that kind of life that a world of moral confusion gives rise to. . . .[17]

Charcoal certainly lives in a world of moral confusion, as do many of Scott's other characters. However, where Charcoal is caught by forces of great historical magnitude, unable to cope because he cannot comprehend his environment, the great forces at work in "Tête-Jaune" are internal and problems arise when people choose to ignore what is good and best within themselves. In the same way that he had seen problems arising when people failed to understand that the historical progression of cultures was necessary, Scott saw suffering within individuals occurring when the ideals of love and reason did not inform conduct.

Paul Laroche, or Bonhomme as he is called by the settlers of Heron Bay on Lake Superior, is the central character and father figure in the story "Tête-Jaune." He is described as being "slow of thought," much like Charcoal, but Bonhomme is at the opening of the story a man of balanced, though strong, emotions. When he learns that during his long absence his wife has become pregnant by another man he is able to accept both her infidelity and the resulting blond child, whom he nicknames Tête-Jaune. Bonhomme's placid acceptance of the world and its conditions forms a dramatic contrast to the intense emotions of his natural son, Laus, who cultivates a hatred for the blond half-brother. The story develops to an eventual tragic ending, with the murder of Tête-Jaune by Laus.

Scott, through the conflict between the two half-brothers, creates a different interpretation for some of his favorite themes. Tête-Jaune, whose real name is Désiré, has all the characteristics of the outcasts found in Scott's poems: he is an illegitimate offspring whose physical appearance, blond and fair, sets him apart from his family and neighbors. Yet he becomes the leader in his family and community, while Laus, because he has a moody personality, becomes the exile. Laus, it is important to realize, chooses to be the kind of person he is and so he is "left to himself and his evil jealousy" (CA, p. 40). The evil Scott speaks of here is psychological, not religiously supernatural, but nevertheless consuming and deadly. The evil within him grows and slowly possesses Laus' character, as he frequently makes trips of self-exile into the forest. Whenever he returns from these periodic escapes, he emerges as a man changed for the worse:

> Laus was as furtive, as silent as of old, but experience had written some sinister lines on his face; he looked dissipated and there was a dangerous confidence in his manner. (CA, p. 42)

His final return marks his total lapse into amoral outlawry, which Scott demonstrates through a pointed use of symbolism:

> He came overland carrying a pack and rifle. He bore signs of hardship, he was gaunt and his eyes were fiery. There was an ugly unhealed wound on his forehead, half gash and half bruise. (CA, p. 45)

A wound to the head appears in other stories such as "Clute Boulay" and is symbolic of the destruction of the reasoning faculty in man. Obsession, especially in the form of hatred, kills the balanced nature which Scott sees as being essential to a life happily lived.

Laus stands as the most obvious example of a moral imbalance in the story, but other characters allow selfishness or unbridled passion to rule their lives too, and in so doing, they contribute to the factors which lead to the final tragedy. Mou-Mou, Laus' mother-in-law, refuses to intervene in the tense love triangle formed by Laus, Tête-Jaune, and Laus' wife Veronique:

> If Laus was not there to protect his interests she would not represent the conventions. She was excited by this approach of passion; it brought back her own youth. (CA, p. 43)

Her motivation lies in a desire for sentimental titillation, but she is not the only one who sees the need for responsible action, yet fails to act. Tête-Jaune and Veronique, who are well aware of Laus' jealousy and violent temper, do nothing to avoid stirring the latter's anger. Their relationship is open, a goad to the husband's rage.

Not even Bonhomme, whose appeals for cool-headedness make him at first seem to be the archetype of mature wisdom, escapes culpability in Scott's vision. The father who preached reason and who himself refused to be aroused unduly by the evidence of his cuckoldry has the greatest share of responsibility for the events that transpire between his two sons. His devotion to Tête-Jaune is unnatural and unfair, likely to create jealousies in the family, and the oddity of his affection is made clear at the moment of its discovery. After a fight erupts between the two young boys, Bonhomme pulls the blond one to himself:

> What had he seen in the boy's eyes? He could not have told, but his whole outlook on life was altered. From that moment he was absorbed in Désiré's life. (CA, pp. 39-40)

A vague apprehension, a whim of paternal sympathy moves Bonhomme from his normal path of thought and action. Scott here is giving an isolated, and probably consciously exaggerated, example of obsessiveness. The obsession is a deviation from the natural flow of events in Bonhomme's life, a complete alteration of behavior in his familial relationships and this change is based on a catalyst of purely subjective and emotional quality.

Personal behavior, Scott believes and wishes to illustrate through Bonhomme's negative example, should be guided by the same principles men ideally use as a society. Laws that reflect a sense of commitment to the best that is in man, love and rationality, should also be adhered to in daily, individual life and should constitute a natural moral order. The natural order Bonhomme has deviated from is the balanced conception of family, an ideal Scott referred to implicitly by studying certain social problems such as the alienation between fathers and sons.

Fathers in Scott's fiction have difficulty perceiving the roles which they must play in the family structure. Bonhomme's exaggerated devotion to Tête-Jaune is really an obsession of the self, a desire to cater to a personal need to be loved. The object of his affection, the illegitimate son, resists the possessiveness hidden in the love, thereby making himself even more desirable:

> For his part, Désiré carelessly accepted what was given him. If he understood this clear preference he gave no sign and even treated his benefactor coldly, with a detachment which provoked Bonhomme. He wanted the youth to treat him as his father and to call him 'père' like the rest of the children. (CA, p. 40)

Scott allows the situation to develop on a twisted psychological course through absurdity and finally to a state of perverted consciousness. When his favorite son lies dead in his arms, murdered by his other son, Bonhomme is overwhelmed, but not by horror and heartbreak as would be expected. Rather, he is caught up in a kind of ecstatic awe over the fact that, in dying, Tête-Jaune has uttered the long-awaited words: "Mon père--mon père" (CA, pp. 46-47). This climax, which might be merely melodramatic if Scott were primarily concerned with eliciting an emotional response in the reader, is ironic and fitting within the context of his study of psychological deterioration.

With the object of his love-obsession dead, Bonhomme steadily loses rational hold upon his life. His memory fails, his movements become aimless. His final lapse is rendered with the help of a symbolic accident, as he suffers a terrible head wound which cripples him mentally. The totality of his degeneration is clear when he sees Tête-Jaune's illegitimate son standing by firelight and is unable to tell if he is looking at the son or at the father. The last scene in the story shows Bonhomme lapsing into a pathetic inner world of silence, a land evidently devoid of all thought and emotion.

Scott uses the failed father figure often enough that a pattern emerges, suggesting he meant the specific character type to be representative of a social malaise. Without the father acting as the figure of traditional power and leadership, the family, itself the key social unit, loses cohesiveness and becomes fragmented. By depicting the problem frequently, Scott shows that he feels it is serious, but he does not seem bent upon calling for the recreation of the father's, or even of the family's, former eminence in the social structure. Protecting moribund social forms is futile, and the role of the father, like the cultural position of the Indian, is in a state of sad but inevitable transition. In the story "Clute Boulay," Scott shows the roles of father and family in absolute dissolution.

"Clute Boulay" (1934) details the disaster that results when an irresponsible man imperfectly assumes the mantle of responsibility. Clute Boulay in his youth was

> a terror, a man who was feared for his strength, for his lawlessness, and for his passion. He bent neither to God nor

> man. He struck with his hands; he went where he listed; he ate what bread he chose. Frenchman by blood, savage by habit and inclination, he had not a friend in the settlement nor one in the camp. (CA, p. 22)

Clute Boulay is a moral half-breed, living alternately in the savage and civilized worlds. He has one foot in the settled life, in some ways comically living the role only too well: he takes not one wife, but two (the one is white, the other native) and proceeds to father two sets of children. But Clute is also a man who lives on the frontier, both physically and behaviorally. His frequent forays into the wilderness serve to intensify his inner savagery, which he then turns upon others when he returns to the settlement. Fights often erupt and during one brawl, Clute receives a horrible head wound which leaves him handicapped in a way that is similar to Bonhomme's condition at the close of "Tête-Jaune."

The description of events leading up to Clute's crippled mental state is a story within a larger story, a device Scott uses for emphasis. The writer wishes to make clear that though Clute has ceased to be a conscious and functioning character, he has still determined the events which follow his decline. He is a potent but crippled father in two ways: he is, first, the biological father of two families and a large number of children. He is also the man who created a potentially explosive situation by having altered the basic family unit to satisfy his own selfish urges. Two separate families exist with only one point in common, the desire to have the love of the father.

Like the storms which slowly gather form in Scott's poems, the competition between the two Boulay families builds to its inevitable and violent climax. In what is the bloodiest scene in all of Scott's writing, the combatants of the two families are evenly matched as to numbers and "in courage and resource; their mutual hatred was vindictive and consuming" (CA, p. 26). There can be no resolution in this clash of feelings, no progression of passion into another emotional state; the brothers and sisters create only the fierce light of total destruction as they set upon each other. In the process of their mutual annihilation, they radiate a beauty that is suggestively opposite to the beauty of love and rationality. Epinette achieves a kind of apotheosis of beauty in her frenzy:

> She swirled about like a column of flame fanned by inner currents of passion. Her eyes glowed with furious lustre . . . . [She was] a vision of savage beauty. (CA, p. 27)

An inversion of normal aesthetic values is accompanied by the inversion of all normal psychological behavior. The story reaches a climax when Clute, surrounded by the butchered remnants of his families, crushes his son in an embrace which ironically resembles a loving father's grip. Scott at one point refers to Clute as an "ancient idol" and at the moment of this murder he most resembles the mythical monster Saturn who was said to have devoured his own children.

The physical violence in "Clute Boulay" very nearly obscures the violence committed on a moral and psychological scale. Western society, Scott believes, is in a state of crisis that is typified by the father's failure to provide a firm base of values and emotions for the family. Fathers in Scott's fiction die, go insane, become senile, disappear into the woods after killing their children, become bigamists or foment deadly jealousies between their offspring. The cause of these forms of aberrant behavior is sometimes shown to be obsession, a desire so strong it eclipses all other concerns. In "Paul Farlotte" the father, dead but remembered by his children, was a man who tinkered constantly with an obscure invention, and in "The Desjardins" a dead father is remembered as a man whose "pride was excessive" and who died insane after becoming imprisoned in the dark regions of his own thoughts. In both stories, children seem to inherit their father's obsessiveness by resurrecting or continuing his particular weakness or passion. Scott evidently believed that obsession was more thoroughly studied by psychological science than by fiction, because he directs his attention to the moral aspects of the problems he identifies. He specifically isolates one kind of obsession, the gratification of personal desire, and defines it as an inability to move beyond the self. Obsession, finally, is an inability to experience love, and is the problem which cripples people such as the title character of the play Pierre.

Despite its melodramatic tendencies, Pierre succeeds in being an interesting inquiry into the problems of modern individualism. Set in Quebec, the work depicts a family that is devoutly Catholic, rurally conservative and grindingly poor. Pierre is the prodigal son who, after years "on the tramp," returns on a New Year's Eve but disappears again the same night. He is the ultimate iconoclast, criticising virtually everything in life that is great and powerful, but especially the traditions of his former home and community. Pierre's bitterness over his own failures to some extent explains the extremity of his views, but his charges usually have some basis in truth. The church, he says, is directly responsible for much of his people's suffering:

> They're what keep the people poor, those big churches, all over the place . . . . they're a pest, that's what they are--they eat up everything.[18]

On a literal level, the argument is facile; for a population that is already poor, the maintenance of churches and a priesthood is an extra burden to be sure, but not so much a one as Pierre suggests. What he goes on to say, and what possesses far greater gravity as a social criticism, is that the church wields a detrimental economic and cultural influence upon its members. As a conservative force, the church is no help to the poor it serves because it encourages social stagnation. The church has a great deal to do with the character of the family, for instance, because it discourages birth control. The link between poverty and the size of a family is clearly made when Pierre asks about a former friend:

> PIERRE: Well, what about Delphine?
> MADAME DUROCHER: Well, she lives now at the Back River, and Hippolyte Desjardins, her husband, he's rich, I can tell you. And she has sixteen children, Pierre.
> PIERRE: What! Sixteen!
> MADAME DUROCHER: But they have plenty Pierre.
> PIERRE: Plenty of children, I should say.[19]

Pierre's skepticism is based on a recognition that at least some of Quebec's economic problems can be traced to traditional family practices. Madame Durocher sees in the Desjardin family an ideal of domestic unity and warmth, but her son only sees the severe material sacrifices involved in reaching the ideal.

Scott's play employs an economic and social background which has been depicted similarly by certain French-Canadian writers. Ringuet's Thirty Acres is, in part, an analysis of the economic woes that arose when farmers in Quebec tried to divide and parcel out to their sons land that was adequate only for the members of the father's family.[20] The economics of the small family farm finally forced the younger generations away from the tightly-knit agrarian communities to other parts of Canada or to the United States. Pierre, who lives during the time of diminishing material comforts in Quebec, is understandably hostile towards the rich who, he says, merely live off the toil of their social inferiors. He justifies his own rootlessness similarly, saying "The rich loaf about and why shouldn't I; the rich steal from the poor and why shouldn't I steal when I have to."[21] Though Pierre's bitterness has a real enough cause, he is irrational in his anger. Scott reveals in the character a personality which has as its central motivation a slovenly self-centeredness; Pierre is clearly unable to see beyond the immediate evidence of his own suffering and cannot be taken seriously as a social critic.

For all his justifiable causes, Pierre represents the meanness of the self in isolation. He recognizes the limitations posed by large families, but he is blind to the potential love that a family represents; he sees the provincialism inherent in the French-Canadian marriage of church and state, but misses entirely the center of spiritual strength the church may constitute for an individual. Worst of all though--and the play may not give sufficient emphasis to a concern which must have been central to Scott's mind--Pierre is guilty of moral and intellectual listlessness. In this, he is representative of the sick social self that Matthew Arnold warned so strenuously against: the idle melancholic person whose very inactivity is a vacuum inviting the possibility of despair and suicide. Arnold's poem "Empedocles on Etna" advises:

> Fear not! Life still
> Leaves human effort scope.
> But, since life teems with ill,
> Nurse no extravagant hope,
> Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not
> then despair![22]

A life-long admirer of Arnold, Scott himself chose to live a life that was the antithesis of despairing inactivity: besides his career as a civil servant and his work as a writer, Scott was involved in an array of clubs, societies and groups which demanded meetings and a great deal of paper work. At times, he seemed to realize that he was compelled in these extracurricular activities by a Victorian sense of duty and not by the joy of the tasks at hand. Commitments to one's life and society give, however, a rational and loving purpose to existence; if this purpose is missing, one is doomed to move aimlessly and without joy, like Pierre. The final rejection of Pierre as a sympathetic character comes when he again flees from his family and community. Before he leaves, he steals money from his mother and sisters, money that they desperately need. His theft is grossly selfish, but no worse than his general failure to trade a narrow theory of social rebellion for a commitment to his fellow man.

Though Scott did not openly criticise conservative Victorian platitudes about the glories of individual effort, his distrust of individualism goes beyond the one example found in Pierre. His short stories in particular often raise questions concerning the individual's ability to perceive his place in society and his moral responsibility to fellow human beings. If Scott believed that there exists a natural order for the individual in choices of action and intellectual orientation, an order which is similar to the one which defines man's place in historical progress, his belief saw the individual will balanced with social needs. In other words, the self must be defined and fulfilled, but not to the detriment of one's social environment. Pierre errs on the side of exclusive individual gratification; his is a willful rebellion carried to a fanatical extreme. In its heightened form the isolation of the self inevitably leads to madness, a mental condition Scott often depicted as the evil mirror image of the reasoning will.

Madness and savagery are related conditions, according to Scott's observations of behavior, and find similar symbolic expression in physical settings. The forest, and other untracked or unfathomable physical bodies, are linked to disassociated sensibilities and unchecked emotions. In "The Desjardins," Scott describes a marshy field, where "you could thrust down a long pole and not touch bottom."[23] The image suggests a lack of definition, a threatening vagueness, and establishes the mood that accompanies Charles' descent into madness. As he comes to see himself as Napoleon Bounaparte, Charles grows "more retired and preoccupied every day--lost in deep reveries, swallowed of ambitious dreams" (Viger, p. 28), as if he were indeed sinking into some bottomless marsh of his own. A similar unbounded region, the forest, forms an atmosphere of horror and foreboding in the story "In the Year 1806." The two characters in the story are employees of the Hudson's Bay Company at a lonely outpost on Lac Achigan. The physical setting is more apparent than in some of Scott's other wilderness stories, which suggests that he intended to create through the work an aesthetic definition for the forest image. Throughout the tale, the forest in its isolation serves to mirror the growing isolation of a human mind and, at last, the mind becomes as unbounded and dark as the vast woodland itself. In those stories where savagery is depicted, the forest becomes a refuge for disordered minds. Clute Boulay, after the horrible massacre of his families, returns to the place which always had nourished one side of his nature:

> Then he rose suddenly and went away, as an animal does who is satisfied. He went into the deepest forest, and for a long

> time he could be heard crashing through the underbrush. He was never seen again, not even a trace of him. (CA, p. 29)

Laus, who kills his half-brother in "Tête-Jaune," also disappears forever into the forest, and Scott seems to be saying that the evil state these men enter is so total that it eclipses their entire being.

Scott uses the physical setting in these stories in a way which deliberately transcends the literal or realistic dimension. John Flood has said, mistakenly I think, that "In the Year 1806" is simply about the processes of a mind going "bushed," driven crazy by extreme isolation:

> The story is concerned with the effect of northern solitude on whitemen who, because they are ill-equipped to handle it, quite simply go mad; it deals with a kind of bush fever that twists the sufferer's sense of freedom and aloneness into a pathological nightmare.[24]

Flood's observation mistakenly attributes to the wilderness itself too much causal power. Scott is actually examining the workings of a destructive human relationship and the dangers of obsession, using the wilderness as a literary device to aid interpretation. Alec, the younger of the two men, is described as a "quick thinking, thin-skinned fellow, chary of speech, but full of broodings and weak proud imaginings" (Viger, p. 96), attributes which make him prone to the descent into insanity he experiences and which evidently would have plagued him whether or not he was in the Lac Achigan outpost. His close confinement with Nairne stirs the potential within Alec, for the older trader is like a catalyst introduced into an unstable environment. He is a "teasing man, without a trace of fine feeling, and withal, a tremendous talker" (Viger, p. 96), and his personality is a torment to Alec who can finally feel nothing else for the man than "Hate, hate, hate, inarticulate, blasting, consuming" (Viger, p. 97).

What Nairne and Alec have in common, though it may seem surprising that they share anything, is a vision limited to the demands of the self. Nairne is described as being so fond of the sound of his own voice that he had not noticed that the other man hadn't spoken to him for three months. This information is characteristic of the kind of exaggeration Scott employs to highlight a very real condition, in this case Nairne's cold refusal to empathize with another man's troubles. The conclusion of the story, which reveals that he has plotted to intensify the impact of Alec's delusions, points to a conscious element of sadism in Nairne's character.

Though Alec is the victim of Nairne's cruelty, Scott is clear in his rejection of the young man's self-indulgence. The "broodings and weak proud imaginings" turn inward and reveal a narcissism, while the overwhelming hatred for Nairne is really only an expression of a personality which, finally, can abide no other than itself. This desire to exclude others (and, by implication, to exclude love as a guiding principle), so thoroughly perverts the emotions that even when he is rid of the hated object Alec's hatred remains. After Alec believes he has killed Nairne he nevertheless thinks he sees the man's face in a mirror and desperately breaks the glass. In a parallel scene, Alec envisions himself on the lake:

> There was a great gulf of mist. Then a dull knocking began--he was very near the lake, but it was stiff and glittering. He picked up a paddle and struck it, once and twice with all his force. It cracked like a mirror from side to side with a piercing sound. (Viger, p. 99)

The vision on the lake is accompanied by a mist, or a clouding of perception, and the water, which is a medium often used by Scott to show processes of the imagination, is hard and unyielding, like Alec's own state of mind. The mirror of the lake is in Alec's mind and serves to show that his hatred arises from within, not from some external cause. Once the hated Nairne disappears, the hatred turns to the only target remaining, its creator. The reward for such narcissistic obsession is self-destruction and Alec suffers both mental and physical death.

"In the Year 1806" is an attempt to recreate a psychologically realistic portrait of a disordered mind; in "Labrie's Wife," Scott employs the same powers of close observation but the focus is upon troubled social relationships. The setting is a northern wilderness region, but in comparison to the story of Nairne and Alec, "Labrie's Wife" fairly teems with characters. As a result, the natural setting recedes in importance while the movements of the characters are shown in detail. Stan Dragland has said that the story is in a "lighter vein" than is "Clute Boulay" (Viger, p. 15), but that opinion can only be held if the critic believes that Scott meant the literal violence of Clute's story to be seen as being more serious than the deaths of feeling which occur in social intercourse in "Labrie's Wife." Scott felt that both kinds of violence were only different results arising from the same inversions of goodness in mankind. There is more than a little similarity between Archibald Muir, the Hudson's Bay clerk in "Labrie's Wife" who unwittingly creates and destroys passions, and Clute Boulay, who irresponsibly fathers families which destroy one another.

Muir, at Nepigon House with an assistant named Alec, is introduced as he discovers that his monopoly in the fur trade is threatened by a party from the Northwest Company headed by a Frenchman named Labrie. Several Indians are with the rival party, including a young woman whom Alec and Muir mistakenly believe is Labrie's wife. The central conflict in the story is provided by a confused lover's triangle: Alec loves Madelaine, who does not take his attentions seriously, and Madelaine loves Muir, who is too obtuse to realize the depth of her emotions. In his own way Muir is also in love, with his work and the universe of his personal needs and aims.

Alec and Muir form opposing poles of emotional response, with the younger man entertaining idealistic views of womanhood and a youthful surrender to both infatuation and its corollary, jealousy. Muir is a man little versed in the ways of love and, it would seem, in the ways of compassion and humanitarianism. Scott shows him to be ruthlessly utilitarian in his attitude towards Indians by having the Hudson's Bay man slander their supposed lack of loyalty:

> So when our Indians come down, and they should be here in a matter of four weeks, they are bound to reach the Post first, and I can keep my eye upon the rascals, who would, if they could, trade with the newcomers and forget old kindnesses and obligations. (_Viger_, p. 102)

In a curt diary entry immediately following the passage above, Muir shows a marked disregard for the feelings of others:

> May Twenty-fourth, 1815
>
> Ogemah-ga-bow came up to say that one of Needic's boys had died last night, having over-eaten himself after his fast on the Dry Beaver Islands. Rain to-day. (_Viger_, p. 102)

Since Needic is a member of the camp, the reader might expect Muir to show some sympathy or at least to note Needic's feelings, but the death is recorded with the same distance as the falling of the rain. The "fast" Muir mentions was in fact an accident in which the Indians had become stranded with no provisions; in Muir's view the entire incident, even the boy's death, is important only insofar as it emphasizes the Indian's inferiority to himself. As a man in a position of responsibility, Muir prides himself in his ability to avoid accidents or overindulgences of any kind, and he has no sympathy for those, like Needic's boy, who are not so careful.

Work, which becomes an intimate extension of himself, appears to possess all of Muir's attention:

> I am much exercised in mind over my responsibilities. It was bad enough last year, but now I have the whole management, and this opposition to contend with upon the back of it. I begin to be worn with it, what with loss of sleep at night, and thinking about nought else in the day. (Viger, pp. 103-104)

Duties do weigh heavily on Muir, as does his ambition, which is evidenced by the fact that he entertains hope for advancement in the company hierarchy. But overwork does not excuse him from the responsibility for the effects his behavior has upon others; preoccupation, in Muir's case at least, is the mind's way of avoiding engagement with other elements in one's environment.

Muir's most obvious method of escaping personal responsibility for his involvement with other people is to claim a lack of consciousness. Muir describes one evening spent drinking alone with Madelaine, the girl from Labrie's party. Afterwards, in his diary, he claims that he was so drunk that he cannot remember what transpired between the two of them and concludes remorsefully, "God forgive me, I do not rightly remember anything about it" (Viger, p. 109). The literal and childlike appeal to an omniscient conscience is typical of Muir's desire to distance himself from the actions of others and, ultimately, from the actions of his social self. Another, he says--a drunk--has done this, has perhaps committed crimes, not I. If he has had intimacies, physical or emotional, with Madelaine, he wishes to absolve himself from their implications by denying conscious involvement. The reader might be tempted to believe Muir's claim to innocence if it were not for the fact that the trader has elsewhere presented a contradictory view of himself.

In the first journal entry of the story, Muir tells how Alec approaches him with the news of the new arrivals in the area. Alec is excited, too excited at first to speak, but Muir pretends to know nothing of the young man's mood:

> I could tell the moment I clapped eyes upon Alec that he had some bee in his bonnet, for he can no more control his countenance than an otter can help fishing. His face was all of a jump, and he spoke as if he had no spittal under his tongue. I have a plan to let the youngster speak when he is ready, and by this means I have the enjoyment of witnessing him cast about to get me to question him and assist him out with his story. (Viger, p. 101)

This incident, which Muir intends the reader to take humorously, is admittedly not enough to judge him as cruel or otherwise morally reprehensible, but his character does emerge as capable of manipulation and self-indulgence. When in following passages he describes his relationship with Madelaine and says he was not aware of the effect he was having upon her, his protestations cannot be taken as being completely credible. The very frequency and force of his defense arouses suspicion, as he repeatedly claims he was too drunk, too busy, or too unconcerned to know what he was doing. Muir's record of his first knowledge of Madelaine's presence in the area is a clear example of this behavior.

Muir does not meet Madelaine before he hears the sound of her laughter:

> Now laughter is an uncommon thing in this country, visiting us very infrequently. To be sure the Indians laugh, but that to me always has an unmeaning sound, and sometimes a bestial. Moreover, this laughter was different in kind, and one must have listened to it however absorbed he might have been. It was high-pitched and very clear and had something merry and withal innocent about it. It was contagious also and the mere sound of it made my very muscles twitch. (Viger, p. 104)

A number of phrases make this passage especially revealing of Muir's character. First, in the journal entry for the previous day, Muir notes that he had asked Labrie where his wife was and had received no clear answer. Since no previous mention has been made of Labrie having had a wife, Muir is revealing a peculiar interest of his own by posing the question. The passage describing the sound of laughter has an indirect quality to it, because Muir says the sound was "high-pitched," "clear," "merry" and "innocent" but stops short of the speculation that it might be "feminine." The laughter, Muir recognizes, is "contagious" and even makes his "very muscles twitch" but he avoids admitting to himself that his impressions are formed by expectation and attraction. He realizes that the woman's laughter has a profound effect upon him, but he rejects a committed articulation of desire. The combination of attraction and repulsion becomes clearer the next morning when Muir sees Madelaine for the first time:

> An uncommon looking wench, with black hair and eyes and a mouthful of white teeth. I discussed her thoroughly with Alec, who sticks up for it that she is a handsome one. So she is, after her manner, though that I do not acknowledge to Alec. She looked me all over as if I were for sale, and when I coolly turned my back on her, that she might have a good look at that, she went off in a mighty huff. (Viger, p. 105)

The passage describes Madelaine's looks as "uncommon," a word that clearly links her in Muir's mind to the laughter of the previous day. He thinks she is handsome but refuses to share this assessment with Alec or

Madelaine and maintains an emotional objectivity by appearing aloof. The passage has a smugly humorous tone, and shows that Muir is aware of the teasing effect he is having upon Alec. Muir does not demonstrate the same degree of consciousness with regard to Madelaine and himself however; he does not show why he treats a woman he finds attractive so lightly. Though Muir in other passages makes repeated references to the fact that he believes Madelaine is married, he nevertheless clearly states that her marital status has nothing to do with his attitude towards her. By having his character demonstrate his freedom from conventional morality in this way, Scott shows that he wishes the story to be read as an examination into the ways of personal choice.

Alec, for all his exaggerated sentimentality and emotionalism, has a clear sense that Muir's behavior is contradictory and socially immoral. The younger man frequently upbraids his superior for lacking a basic awareness of social implications: "You have no understanding of women. . . . Of course she will come back when you treat her that way" (Viger, p. 105). Muir is only too happy to agree with these accusations, saying, "I am not much versed in women's ways. . . . In truth I know naught about them" (Viger, p. 107). If the reader takes these protestations of innocence as the truth, Muir emerges as a man with serious emotional and social defects and one who perhaps deserves pity, but Scott does not allow his characters to escape moral responsibility. Muir makes choices, executes certain actions, then attempts to absolve himself of the consequences; far from having no knowledge of women, he has a definite body of opinions which were formed in his boyhood.

Scott believes that confusions over the right paths of moral behavior occur early in life and establish patterns. The adult Muir blames the amount of whiskey he drank for his lack of memory concerning what, if anything, happened between himself and Madelaine. What he does remember, in a curious interruption in the narrative flow of journal recordings, is a scene from his childhood:

> Ah, those women! I well remember my father used to say, "At the bottom of every trouble, there you will find a woman," and my mother used to retort, "And likewise at the bottom of every happiness." Whereupon he would kiss her. (Viger, p. 109)

The interjected anecdote is in the form of a bit of folksy wisdom, but provides a commentary and contrast to Muir's own behavior. His mother and father evidently recognized that human relationships brought both pain and joy. Muir, however, only follows one half of his father's lead in a man's relationships to women. He has evidently been intimate in some way with Madelaine, either sexually or otherwise, because when he next meets her she expects a tenderness and commitment from him, and is surprised and crushed when he shows none. Muir rejects Madelaine and, in doing so, shows that he cannot achieve the balanced vision of women and love that his father possessed. Muir speaks for the last time with Madelaine:

> "Were you ever in love?" she asked suddenly.
> "Never," said I, "praise be to God."
> "When you are I pray heaven you may be tortured in it."
> "I am thankful for your good wishes." (Viger, p. 110)

The responsibility for loving, the ability to accept the fact that love means both trouble and happiness, is something Muir cannot embrace. He denies that Madelaine's love is real, that his involvement is real, and he even tries to deny that he understands what has happened between them.

After Madelaine's departure, the two men discover a note from her which clearly establishes that she is not married. Alec realizes that his own moral restraint against making overtures to her was unnecessary and that Madelaine's love for Muir had been innocent and therefore tragic. When Alec tries to express his rage and frustration over the affair, Muir can only repeat, "No, I did not understand." If Muir's character had been left represented by this final refusal, his personality would emerge as unredeemably cruel, but Scott has the man experience the extent of his guilt in the last scene. The sound of Alec's sobbing following the discovery of the note triggers another recollection, presumably from Muir's boyhood. Muir remembers a scene of consuming grief and is faced with the realization that his actions have precipitated a similar kind of sorrow:

> I looked up at Alec and there he was leaning at the door-post, his shoulders all moving with his sobs. I understood in a flash. I pray God to forgive me for the sin of blindness, and for always being so dead to others in my own affairs. (Viger, p. 112)

Finally, Muir can no longer deny understanding, or deny the enormity of his responsibility for his part in the lives of others. The "blindness" he names is a willful and, in Scott's view, an unnatural desire to live as an incomplete emotional being. "Labrie's Wife" is, with the exception of the Untitled Novel, Scott's most detailed analysis of the dangers of the self in isolation, of individualism as a detrimental social force.

Scott's Untitled Novel (1905), first published in 1979, is an interesting literary document for a number of reasons. I use the word document because even in its published form (and presumably with the assistance of an informed editor) the work does not meet the requirements of a standard definition of the novel form. Numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, diction and grammar plague the piece and one wonders why the editor, John Flood, chose to release it with no attention to the glaring errors. In defense of Untitled Novel, though, it should be said that the characters, plot and thematic structures are generally adequate, suggesting that only a few more revisions would have rectified the more obvious weaknesses. Why then, a reader might ask, did Scott not complete the necessary emendations and publish his only known venture into the longer form, especially since he had over forty years to do so? Stan Dragland has said that the novel would not have enhanced Scott's reputation (Viger, p. 11), and perhaps the writer felt likewise, thinking the needed repair work would still have left him with a basically unsound structure. Whatever the reasons for the decision, the work was never brought to print and therefore its importance, if any, is ultimately as a critical source of ideas illuminating the body of work which Scott did publish.

The moral problems explored in his poetry and short stories are brought into sharper focus in the novel, as Scott chooses to examine attitudes which in his day were treated conventionally in Canadian fiction. Glenn Clever notes that Scott avoids standard treatment in a number of areas: the novel has no clear religious focus, does not apply poetic justice to the actions of the characters, and treats adultery, marriage breakdown, and sex outside marriage in an open fashion. Comparing the Scott novel to other works of the time, such as The Man from Glengarry and Anne of Green Gables, Clever concludes:

> With few exceptions in these novels either the pioneer virtues or the Victorian niceties, if not both, prompt and bulwark the action. Scott's novel differs. Its characters live in an amoral atmosphere, unlit either by authorial overview or by [the] sudden, extraneous optimism at the close.[25]

Clever sees that the inner moral reality of Scott's characters often has as much to do with the outcome of their lives as the reality of their environment. Setting, time sequences and other aspects of physical reality are either underplayed or simply ignored to provide an open canvas for the drawing of character.

Though women play important roles in the novel, male characters most clearly demonstrate the concerns Scott worked with in his short stories. Father and son relationships, for example, are rarely happy, but Scott delves more deeply into the behavior of these men than he did in the shorter fiction, analyzing thoughts and motivations. A rich businessman, John Applegarth, fathers an illegitimate son, Robin, and attempts indirectly to mold the boy into a copy of himself. In his obsession to have the boy modelled after himself, Applegarth approaches the narrow vision of Bonhomme in "Tête-Jaune." Firmian Underwood, the son of the fundamentalist Reverend Underwood, is a variation on the wayward son Pierre of the play, but with a more complete fleshing out of evil wilfulness. The rift between fathers and children goes beyond the natural gulf that arises as children grow from their parents, as Firmian is seen as being constitutionally the antithesis of his father. The reverend may err on the side of blind piousness, but Firmian is "Vengeance incarnate," a man who lives in the dark regions of the spiritual and moral universe and who

> finally goes off, as he has repeatedly done through the course of the novel, into the criminal 'demi-monde' from which he periodically emerges.[26]

The criminal region critic Glenn Clever describes here is the one which Scott has used symbolically in other works. Firmian seeks an underworld of amorality which matches his inner moral state, and Laus and Clute

Boulay find a home for the savagery within themselves by escaping to the frontiers of the wilderness.

Clever, though he gives an insightful treatment of the novel, tends to miss an obvious imbalance when he praises what he calls the neutrality of Scott's position relative to his characters:

> Unlike the constant authorial intrusion of most of the novelists of this period, Scott keeps relatively distant from his material and his characters, makes no attempt to induce either sympathy or antipathy in the reader but rather a deliberate balancing out, as he does in his shorter fiction. . . .[27]

Though it is true that Scott maintains a neutral tone by avoiding direct personal comment, it is also true that he creates a one-sided world of moral anarchy: savagery emerges from the forest and possesses all of society. Many of the short stories have a similarly bleak vision, but because of the novel's length and detailed development of character, Scott's message seems unrelenting, a picture of a rampant social malaise. If the realistic fiction of the time by Dreiser and others showed how social conditions placed heavy strictures upon individuals and how life was ordered by a bleak determinism, Scott presents an equally negative, and inaccurate, view of man's moral nature. The characters are too complete in their failings. Purcell is a musician of questionable talent who seduces women only that he may possess them and manipulate their resources for his own debauched ends. His wife Barbara is a vacuously innocent female who fails to elicit the reader's sympathy because she mistakes romantic excitement for love, while her friend Adrienne is an obsessive cynic whose love for Purcell can only be realized through equally strong expressions of hatred for her rival, Barbara. Even a character such as Cornelia, who is motivated by genuine love for art and a concern for others, fails because she is unable to interpret correctly the actions of those around her. She dies, a helpless victim of the stupidity and wickedness in Scott's disordered moral universe.

Scott wrote poetry and fiction with a dualism in mind, one which presented him with a structural crisis he was never entirely able to surmount and which is most obvious in the concluding pages of the Untitled Novel. As Barbara and her father depart on a ship from Canada and from the disastrous events of their recent past, they become hopeful and joyous in a way that is reflected by the environment:

> Unnoticed by them as they talked, the ship had got underway, lances, streamers of light had shaken through the mist, it seemed to crumble around them, to evaporate, to disappear as if by magic, it was rolled from them as they swept on, and it lay banked across the path they had come like a huge faint-grey barrier, solid and luminous. Ahead, and upon all sides, was the fresh sunlit air. The heads of the waves sprang into foam and crashed gloriously down. The boat sank through them with a valiant shock. To the south lay masses of mountains glistening to the tops with the retreating mists, and flooded with sunshine. Their way lay beyond where the mighty streams and tides of the gulf went out to sea. (Novel, pp. 314-15)

Scott is correct in describing the change as occurring "as if by magic" because there is little in the previous plot development to justify the change in the story's general mood or in the outlook of the two characters. Hopelessly contrived, the concluding scene must fail and stands as a clear example of one of the limitations of the poems and stories discussed in this chapter. Scott addressed himself in the novel to one side of the duality in man's nature, the side dominated by subjective hatred and irrationality, and, finding himself with a book too darkly cast, attempted to balance the outlook with an ending that evidences transcendent happiness. He uses the same approach in those poems and stories concerned with universal or individual disorder, and the separation of dualistic parts means that he is never able to create characters that grow or develop to higher states. The positive qualities of love and rationality may be implied in a character (insofar as the one part of a duality implies its counterpart), but Scott chooses to isolate a specific human problem and analyze it fully. Dramatic illumination of a trait may be achieved with this approach, but not accuracy: weakness or evil rarely exist in perfect isolation in a society or an individual. Scott's characters, as a result, are subordinated to the purposes of social theory.

In his thorough exploration of social and moral problems, Scott sacrificed the full development of his characters in favor of the creation of types. In its extreme manifestation, his preference ran to stereotypes, the Indians and Scotsmen who are readily recognized by their predictable behavior as they cross the imaginative stage. Related to the stereotyped character, but far more common and more central to Scott's purpose, is the personality type who reveals a universal aspect: the man of a violent temper or obsessive selfishness. Clute Boulay is memorable because he typifies the irrational will at work and is a perfect example of the self-destructiveness of that will. Scott dichotomized the range of human behavior relatively early in his writing career when he wrote the poem "The Harvest," and repeated the pattern in successive works. The workers in "The Harvest" are good, oppressed folk, and their oppressors are cast as self-serving hypocrites; both groups are faceless masses representing general human qualities. The opposing groups in "The Harvest" are never seen locked in actual struggle, and it is worth noting that in Scott's other works the forces of good and evil rarely come into direct conflict. Lasting changes are effected by the impersonal forces of history or circumstance; individuals rarely change with regard to their behavior or outlook, but are destroyed by inner weakness or failing. Powassan attempts to use superstition against the natural progression of history and succeeds only in summoning a blind and destructive fury; Firmian, virtually unopposed, happily works his way further and further into the disordered underworld of criminality.

Because he denied his characters the opportunity to experience growth through inner conflict and discovery, Scott was limited in his creation of what Glenn Clever calls a moral realism. The characters exercise choice between paths of behavior but the process leading to choice is generally one which the reader realizes is in the mind of the author and revealed in the schematic ordering of plot events and character types, not one which is shown through the real growth of individuals.

Scott's motivation as an artist, ultimately, was to conceptualize and articulate a human ideal; to do so, he felt compelled to reveal clearly the general conditions which prevented man from attaining the highest standards in thought and behavior. Certainly human weaknesses such as anger, hatred, and greed stood in the way of improvement, but man's resistance to change was also a major obstacle. Governments, cultural groups and religious faiths must give way to the processes of change, and with the passage of time human nature too would have to undergo transformation. Whether the changes in man and society occurred peacefully and gradually, or through a violent storm of upheaval, Scott believed an ideal was being approached by way of historical progression.

The works discussed in this chapter have a moral purpose at their center, one which is often obvious; the works discussed in the next chapter are also informed by a strong moral vision, but in a less obvious manner. These works reflect an interest in a specific aspect of human psychology, the action and consequence of desire, and approach their concerns symbolically rather than in realistically descriptive ways. Frequently, these writings address the problems of subjectivity and, as is the case with the collection, The Green Cloister, the problem of the artist's perception of himself in relation to his world.

CHAPTER V

DESIRE AND THE SORROWS OF ACCEPTANCE

My aim in the preceding two chapters has been to show that the product of Scott's self-conscious and highly disciplined mind was an intellectualized and ideal vision of reality. When occupied with broad subjects such as religion, philosophy, conduct, and historical change, he attempted a scheme which was consistent with the anteriorities of his culture; the result is a seemingly firm conviction in the virtues of discipline, courage, high ideals and, finally, acceptance. My contention in this chapter is that Scott's thoughts on art and the role of the artist reveal an inconsistency based upon a profound psychological ambivalence that is not readily seen in his other major thematic statements. This facet of Scott's writing evidences itself most strongly both in the individual works and in the overall nature of the penultimate collection, The Green Cloister.

The analysis in this chapter concentrates on the complexities in Scott's work of a concept, desire, and the manifestations of a symbolic entity, the circle. Of the concept desire, I wish to make two things clear immediately. First, my interest in the treatment of desire by Scott is a result of having recognized the frequency with which desire is a central concern in his writing. This observation is related to my second point, which is that a significant number of modern critics have made the term desire a key part of their language when they consider literature in relation to areas outside the mainstream of criticism, such as philosophy, psychology, and anthropology, or when they have applied elements of these pursuits to literary criticism. Though my study of the concept of desire was not determined by these other critical investigations, I think some reference to these works will help to clarify certain aspects of my interpretation of Scott.

One school of criticism has consistently addressed itself to the question of desire's role in the determination of human behavior. As Stephen Melville has stated:

> I would suggest that, for the most part, we operate with an implicit picture of psychoanalysis that recognizes "desire" as a central theoretical term (and practical issue) which is understood to be directly connected to a biology of needs (to such an extent that there is no theoretically marked difference between desire and need: they name equally the working of the "sexual instinct").[1]

My critical approach seeks to avoid the specific and often too narrow interpretations of the so-called psychoanalytic group of critics, but I do wish to call attention to the psychological, and sometimes sexual, dimensions of some of Scott's writing. There is especially an apparent discrepancy between intellectual aspirations and those of an emotional nature, a split which frequently develops into a major conflict. In several of the works discussed in this chapter, the power of emotional desire is revealed as being able to reorder reality. I. A. Richards says emotional needs are manipulative, that they have the power to alter otherwise rational systems of thinking:

> Given a need (whether conscious as a desire or not), any idea which can be taken as a step on the way to its fulfillment is accepted, unless some other need equally active at the moment bars it out. This acceptance, this use of the idea--by our interests, desires, feelings, attitudes, tendencies to action and what not--is emotional belief.[2]

Richards' approach to the study of desire is similar to that of the psychoanalytic critics, in that both views claim to see in the psychological phenomenon of desire a concept that enables the fuller understanding of literary texts. It is possible to say of works by Scott that a study of the processes of desire is valuable in coming to an understanding of the voices and characters used in his work, and contributes to an appreciation of some of Scott's motives as an artist.

Anxiety over a definition of the Self is not something commonly recognized as being a consideration with Scott, who evidently knew who he was and why he did what he did as an artist. Yet much of The Green Cloister, from the irony of "Reality" to the self-depreciation of "The Nightwatchman," is a critical internal questioning of aesthetic goals and practices. The sense of a split between the Self and the perceived "otherness" of the world (including that annihilation of being, death) is strong in this last major work of an aging artist. A consideration of what some critics have had to say about this sense of separation as it evidently appears in American literature provides a means of comparison for Scott's particular imaginative context.

Harold Bloom and J. Hillis Miller, for example, see in American literature a tradition of the strong Self in a crisis of identity, with Wallace Stevens as a foremost modern example of an attitude which found its earlier spokesmen in Whitman and Emerson. Bloom wishes to be concise and says that Emerson's formula was "The American Sublime equals I and the Abyss,"[3] but Miller yields more insight into the relationship of the Self and the Other, saying,

> One of the crucial moments of Emerson's "Experience" is his rejection of any confrontation of another, or equal relation to another, even in love. The other can only be an image or icon

> of the self and so not its equal. All doubling or imaging must be rejected as introducing chaos into the spherical and all-inclusive unity of the self. Subject can only marry object, that is, not something its equal or fellow but something which can be devoured, wholly mastered. . . .[4]

The American experience, as described by Miller, discloses an imperial Self, a powerful subjective "I" colonizing and imaginatively levelling the world. We have seen how intellectual ideals permitted Scott to reject the notion of the Self isolated and eminent in power in favor of the idea of the individual as subordinate to social and historical process, but the picture is somewhat different when he turns inward to a consideration of his personal situation as an artist. Emotional desires mount a serious challenge to intellectual desires, and the result in The Green Cloister, for example, is deep inner conflict.

Emerson, the American philosopher Scott long found to be interesting,[5] saw the circle as a model of the Self that had its image repeated in the universe:

> The eye is the first circle; the horizon where it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end. It is the highest emblem in the cipher of the world.[6]

Emerson saw concentric circles approximating the way in which the human Self could bring the unknown (or, as Bloom calls it, the Void) under control. Each condition of knowledge or being could be superseded by another, larger, circle:

> . . . if the soul is quick and strong, it bursts over that boundary on all sides, and expands another orbit in the great deep, which also runs up into a high wave, with attempts again to stop and to bind.[7]

Always expanding, always seeking newness that will inevitably become familiar, Emerson's version of Self imaginatively seeks to possess and name the outside as if it cannot exist but to become part of the Self.

Circles are also very important as symbols for Scott, but the image is often ambivalent, suggesting at the same time desire to partake of the difference that is the Other, and desire to extend the Self as informing and ordering presence into the unstructured void of Otherness. An example of this sort is seen in "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon." The flight of the dove in the poem, figuratively describing the sound of the hymn, is circular:

> Each long cadence, flying like a dove from her shelter
> Deep in the shadow, wheels for a throbbing moment,
> Poises in utterance, returning in circles of silver
> To nest in the silence. (Poems, p. 24)

The dove simile in these lines is an example of one of the two uses Scott makes of the circle image, that of the circle as path. The circular path is actually formed around two poles of desire, with consciousness being drawn alternately to the demands of the Self and to those of the Other. The scene at Lake Nipigon shows the desires of the speaker being first powerfully drawn to the outside, to some sense of a promise of completion, then falling back again to the safety and familiarity of the Self. Rebirth of the speaker's cherished faith is promised if only acceptance of the totality of the world is accomplished, but the powerful Self, armed with ordering structures of tradition, cannot relinquish its informing vision. Unlike Noah's dove, which symbolized man's acceptance and trust in that which is given and exists outside the Self, Scott's dove is fettered, tied to an orbit that always brings it back to the Self.

Emerson's circles express a Manifest Destiny of the Self; Scott's circles, a searching irresolution of constant motion. The dualistic orbit is destroyed usually only when forces of situation or circumstance, symbolized by the storm in "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon," intervene. Desire unresolved implies a separation of the Self from the imagined completion to be gained through a joining with the Other, and in many cases, the unification sought can only be achieved in death.

The clearest example of circular paths of desire seeking resolution in death is found in the paired poetical study, "The Wood by the Sea" and "The Sea by the Wood." Both poems speak in a first-person voice, an "I" which feels incomplete, alienated and bored in its fragmented Self, and desires to be joined with its counterpart. No resolution is in fact suggested by a reading of the two poems, no discovery of a whole Self is implied by circularity of desire.

The speaker in "The Sea by the Wood" represents that yearning in the Self which seeks recognition, identity, and a particular sense of time and place. It abhors its own condition, which it identifies with death and loss:

> The waves are weary of hiding pearls,
> Are aweary of smothering gold,
> They would all be air that sweeps and swirls
> In the branches manifold.
>
> They are weary of laving the seaman's eyes
> With their passion prayer unsaid,
> They are weary of sobs and the sudden sighs
> And movements of the dead.
>
> All the sea is haunted with human lips
> Ashen and sere and grey. . . . (Poems, p. 209)

In these lines, the desire to join with the Other is fully realized in the great obliterating wash of the sea. But the desire for the sea of Otherness is checked by the discovery of its demand for loss of living experience or particularity, and--in short--the loss of Self. As the speaker looks longingly to the wood, he acknowledges the beauty of the sea and its strong attraction, but he also expresses a strong yearning towards an individuated and self-protected condition:

> The deeps are green as an emerald's face,
>   The caves are crystal calm,
> But I wish the sea were a little trace
>   Of moisture in God's palm. (Poems, p. 209)

Otherness, for this is what the sea of death represents to the speaker, means absolute loss of the individuated Self, an obliteration that is too powerful, too absolute to accept. What is desired is that the completion offered by death somehow would be accomplished without losing the controlling consciousness of the Self:

>   If mine were the will of God, the main
> Should melt away in the rustling wood
>   Like a mist that follows the rain. (Poems, p. 209)

Notice that the ideal action would have the sea "melt away" and become, somehow, a part of its counterpart the wood. The central desire is to reject the fact of death's awful terms of absoluteness by making it subject to the will, or vision, which guarantees the sanctity of the Self.

In contrast to the reluctance to relinquish life and its subjective experiences is the attitude expressed by the speaker in "The Wood by the Sea." In this poem, the "I" is tired of the familiarity of Self, of the particulars of experience:

> I dwell in the wood that is dark and kind
>   But afar off tolls the main,
> Afar, far off I hear the wind,
>   And the roving of the rain.
>
> The shade is dark as a palmer's hood,
>   The air with balm is bland:
> But I wish the trees that breathe in the wood
>   Were ashes in God's hand. (Poems, p. 210)

The wood holds life which is peaceful and comforting, yet it is this same proof of consciousness, this detailed evidence of self-conscious life, that summons the desire for the fires of obliteration. Seventeen years after the publication of this poem in 1905, Scott was to find fault with Matthew Arnold's sentiment, "Weary of myself, and sick of asking what I am and what I ought to be" (DCS, p. 16), but the mood of "The Wood by the Sea" is indeed one of weariness:

> The pines are weary of holding nests,
>   Are aweary of casting shade;
> Wearily smoulder the resin crests
>   In the pungent gloom of the glade.
>
> Weary are all the birds of sleep,
>   The nests are weary of wings
> The whole wood yearns to the swaying deep,
>   The mother of restful things. (Poems, p. 210)

The difference between this attitude and the one taken with regard to Arnold in the "Poetry and Progress" speech in 1922 is explained not only by the passage of years and an adjustment in personal outlook, but also by the fact that the speaker in the poem deals with the complexities of emotion on a personal level, while the speaker in "Poetry and Progress" is considering an ideal intellectual model of cultural development. Studying the individual dilemma of too much Self, Scott discovers a weariness that seemingly can only be cured by sinking into the Otherness of death.

Death, for the speaker of the wood, is a release from the prison that the Self has become. When he does articulate a vision of movement, an escape, it is ironically with no appreciation of what death, as the speaker of the sea experienced it, really is. The sea had been seen as overburdened by death, a condition represented by great numbers of drowned men. The yearning of the wood is therefore an ironic echo:

> If mine were the will of God,--O, then
> The wood should tramp to the sounding sea,
> Like a marching army of men! (Poems, p. 210)

The two wood and sea poems pose a problem of permanent irresolution. Neither desire (for the absoluteness of Self or the absoluteness of Other) is achieved, nor are the two desires brought together in resolution: "But I dwell in the sea that is wild and deep," admits the one voice and "I dwell in the wood that is dark and kind," says the other, as two halves of the fragmented Self look longingly at one another from opposite points of an orbit.

The wood and sea pair of poems aims to capture the ambivalence inherent in the balancing of strong desires, but in a poem such as "The Piper of Arll," the circularity of desire is introduced, and seemingly resolved, though not without great frustration. Scott again uses the land and the sea to represent poles of perceived states of being, with the Piper as a pastoral figure of the Self whose "heart was swayed with faithful love,/ From the springs of God's ocean clear and deep . . ." (Poems, p. 35). The mysterious ship of sailors is itself an imaginative product of this love, and appears to the Piper with an implied promise of fulfillment for his needs. The Piper thinks he wants to offer his Self over to the Otherness of the sea, but the vision he summons, the ship, is in fact a narcissistic projection of Self. After singing "their longing songs of home," the sailors are silent:

> When the sweet airs had fled away,
> The piper, with a gentle breath,
> Moulded a tranquil melody
> Of lonely love and longed-for death.
> . . . .

> Then from the dark and dreamy deck
> An alien song began to thrill;
> It mingled with the drumming beck,
> And stirred the braird upon the hill.
>
> Beneath the stars each sent to each
> A message tender, till at last
> The piper slept upon the beach,
> The sailors slumbered round the mast. (Poems, p. 36)

The Piper's desire for idealized death is so consuming that the Self becomes abhorrent. When the desire for Otherness is not immediately realized and the sailors withdraw, the Piper goes into a Self-destructive rage, destroying the reed which is the instrument of his informing vision. But this act leaves him with the Self, grown wearisome like the consciousness of "The Wood by the Sea," and he quickly reconstructs the instrument and the vision.

As the Piper joins the sailors on board their ship, there is a brief and illusory sense of glorious resolution in death:

> Silent they rowed him, dip and drip,
> The oars beat out an exequy,
> They laid him down within the ship,
> They loosed a rocket to the sky.
>
> It broke in many a crimson sphere
> That grew to gold and floated far,
> And left the sudden shore-line clear,
> With one slow-changing, drifting star. (Poems, p. 38)

Critics, in their passion to find a consistent Canadian metaphor in Scott's poem, have refused to see the universal metaphysical message that informs the work and this passage in particular. Gary Geddes reads "The Piper" as:

> an allegory of the artist. Living in harmony with his idyllic environment, the artist is confronted with a vision of loneliness to which he responds creatively. (DCS, p. 173)

Because Geddes wishes to see the poem as a journey from alienation to fulfillment, he interprets the ending as a realization of "intimations of immortality," a view which, though stated differently, is shared by Fred Cogswell. Arll, Cogswell claims,

> represents the poet's physical universe; the sea becomes eternity; the ship represents an anthology, the repository of the poets and their works that affects the poet at an early stage in his career and to which he and his work are added at the close.[8]

Both Geddes and Cogswell read the concluding scene beneath the sea as peaceful and fulfilling, though Cogswell realizes his reading seems incomplete and excuses any inconsistencies in his interpretation by saying that the text itself demands inconsistency:

> A matter-of-fact critic of the analysis I have given above might well question how the dead poets of tradition appeared as living ones at the time of their first encounter with the piper; how and why they came to get him, again as living poets; and how and why they sank with him, and presumably shared his fate, at the hour of his death. They might not accept my explanation that the demands of the ballad narrative form and the opportunities such treatment gave for graphic description impelled Scott to violate a strict symbolic design.[9]

The questions Cogswell so easily dismisses in fact constitute the means to understanding the symbolic structure of the poem. He and Geddes misread "The Piper of Arll" and especially its ending simply because they do not realize that the symbolism of the ocean is consistent with usage in other Scott poems: that is, that the ocean, symbolic of death, is both attractive and repellent to the Self.

The sailors and the Piper, after all, do not get what they expect. After the ceremonial fireworks, sails are made ready and "They waited for a ruffling breeze":

But in the world there was no stir,
The cordage slacked with never a creak,
They heard the flame begin to purr
Within the lantern at the peak.

They could not cry, they could not move,
They felt the lure from the charmed sea;
They could not think of home or love
Or any pleasant land to be. (Poems, p. 39)

How any reader could miss the fact that the planned voyage is a failure, that the expectations of desire on the part of the Piper are fulfilled in an unexpected way, is puzzling. The ship's descent as it sinks beneath the ocean waves is a journey into dream become nightmare. This is the place, described in "The Sea by the Wood," that is weary of its cargo of human dead:

All the sea is haunted with human lips
  Ashen and sere and grey,
You can hear the sails of the sunken ships
  Stir and shiver and sway. . . . (Poems, p. 209)

The similarity of "The Sea by the Wood" to the final scene in "The Piper of Arll" clearly shows that Scott is working on the same symbolic and psychological levels in both poems.

The Piper is certainly an artist-figure, but the importance of this characterization lies in his imaginative yearning for an idealistic wholeness of being, a desire to grasp the mystery of death on terms wholly acceptable to the Self. His final perfect song on shore is a personal interpretation of this dream:

He, singing into nature's heart,
Guiding his will by the world's will,
With deep, unconscious, childlike art
Had sung his soul out and was still.

And then at evening came the bark
That stirred his dreaming heart's desire. . . .
(Poems, p. 38)

It would be misleading to place too much emphasis on the image of the Piper as one who has surrendered himself to the "world's will" and achieved a spontaneous, "unconscious" art. These sentiments of Romantic aesthetics are part of the ideal and self-deluding vision of the Piper's imagination; the Piper plays, it must be remembered, with a purpose, to summon the ship, "his dreaming heart's desire." Also, before he sings his soul out (supposedly in unpremeditated ecstasy), he is described as forming his song in complete control and self-consciousness:

> Beneath the pines he piped and swayed,
> Master of passion and of power;
> He was his soul and what he played,
> Immortal for a happy hour. (Poems, p. 37)

Thus, a strong case can be made for seeing the ship of sailors as being a reciprocal part of the Piper's projected imaginative vision. The ship mysteriously appears after his "faithful" love for the ocean has been established, and the sailors' song prompts the Piper's own song of "lonely love and longed-for death." The sailors sing "longing songs of home" but this home is never named, detailed, or in any other way given a sense of actual place. The reason is that this home is part of the imagined place of the Piper's desire, just as the oceanic home is yearned for by the speaker in "The Wood by the Sea."

Those who desire death cannot do so by journeying across an ocean of their own making; the true and awful Otherness of death overwhelms the Piper and his desire, just as the darkness and storm finally overwhelm the dove-like hymns of "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon." The ship must sink, and as it does, the supposed resolution becomes ironic and emotionally unfulfilling. Faced with the actuality of lost identity in death, the Piper might well yearn again for life and the music of personal vision, but it is too late. As the crew begins to sink, the imaginative vision is directed, as a mute desire, back upwards. The loss is so profound, it can only be voiced in the negative:

> They could not cry, they could not move,
> They felt the lure from the charmed sea;
> They could not think of home or love
> Or any pleasant land to be. (Poems, p. 39)

The mood in these lines is one of inarticulate regret and helpless sorrow, of yearning that can find no voice. Imaginative vision, which had desired to know and possess death within the control of the still-conscious Self, is likewise reversed: as the Piper and the dreaming crew are seen at ocean's bottom, they are "upward gazing." Their eyes are not real, only "starry pits of gold" that hold the lifeless memory of a dream. The Piper and his sailors have become like the corpses of the sea in "The Sea by the Wood," dead men whose presence forms an implicit desire to possess, once again, life and the Self.

The nature of ambivalent desires is not limited in Scott's work to the duality of life and death. In fact, his use of circular patterns emerges with more schematic clarity in those works, usually prose, which study the relation of the Self to a different form of the Other: the community, the family, or another individual. In "Charcoal," an early story that shows signs that the author is trying to envision the complexities of a theory, the plot is obviously patterned after circular paths of movement.

Generally, conflict in "Charcoal" conforms to Scott's view of cultural groups struggling with change, and the reader is told that Charcoal's internal struggle is in fact a war between his "good" Indian and his "bad" Indian. Occasionally, the author cannot help pointing the reader along the path of interpretation, as is the case when Scott observes that the conflict is "once more civilization against savagery" (CA, p. 217). Yet, Scott's story also attempts to see the events as the unfolding dilemma of individual choice. At one point Charcoal is said to "circle like a hawk about his own reserve" (CA, p. 217). The circular pattern is established with the opposing poles of attraction being the exile's desire for self-preservation and his need to return to community. In fact, Charcoal's own thoughts about his behavior show that he has some insight into the problem posed by the conflicting desires of the Self and the Other: his acts of murder are, he knows, an expression of the "bad," the tribal, and supposedly the more natural Self, while his yearning to surrender, to rejoin his people, is an expression of the "good" Indian who conforms to the new, communal image of the native transformed by white influences.

Scott, however, cannot quite decide whether to let Charcoal's actions be informed solely by this psychological pattern of desire, or to lean upon clichéd conceptualizations of character. Two examples show how the presence of inconsistent motivations result in an unsatisfying character profile. When the Indian is being pursued by police, the author says, "Charcoal resolved that, so far as he was able, he would make it a long and merry chase," and later, that Charcoal "well knew what an excitement his escape was causing, and his gratified vanity bore him through perils and hardships which he might have shunned." Noble and dashing rascal that he appears to be in these passages, the portrayal of Charcoal as an aboriginal Scarlet Pimpernel does nothing to enhance the far more intriguing picture of him as a man experiencing fierce inner conflicts.

Inappropriate authorial assessments of character reveal one aspect of Scott's uncertainty in the story; structure, in the form of an awkward transition between paragraphs, repeats the evidence of imperfect rendering. A paragraph which describes Charcoal's shooting of a policeman and subsequent escape concludes:

> From a mile distant he saw his pursuers stooping over the body of the sergeant. Slowly he raised his arm and turned from them, making for Stand-Off and the mouth of the Kootenay. (CA, p. 220)

The next paragraph begins abruptly:

> Wolf-plume was Charcoal's brother-in-law. He had a house with two stories, and one bed in which he never slept. Following the agent's directions, by day his house wore an inviting appearance; by night it was lighted as if prepared for feasting and tea drinking. . . . [A description of Charcoal's appearance at the house follows, including the statement that his decision to enter is made after he smells stew cooking inside.] . . . A bench was placed for him. The stew tasted like nothing which had ever passed his lips before; and weariness overcame him, weariness and sleep. After weeks of privation, starved, frozen, jaded with the saddle, hunted for his life, he laid down in the house of his friends and slept. (CA, pp. 220-21)

Though the rapid transition in time and place between these two paragraphs is probably made in a conscious way to achieve a tightness of narrative flow, the content of the second paragraph suggests that Scott made the jump because he was not prepared to follow through with the implications of the psychological crisis he saw evolving in his character. The problem is simply stated: because the authorities seem incapable of capturing him, Charcoal is placed in a position where he must choose one of the two poles of his desire, Self or Other. He must make a commitment, or his life could become an eternal scenario of circular motion. Scott has established the language for such a choice through the terms "good" and "bad" Indian, and with the contrast between old and new ways, but in the concluding scenes of the story, he deprives Charcoal of his earlier troubled awareness of his situation. By placing an emphasis upon Charcoal's physical needs as deciding factors leading to his capture, Scott undercuts the Indian's tragic dimension. What is forgotten at the scene of capture is the sense that in his loneliness of Self, Charcoal increasingly felt the desire to join the Otherness of community, family and friends. The fact that Charcoal is drawn to a sense of Otherness which no longer exists, and which is replaced by an Otherness determined by white law and values and therefore truly alien, is the potentially powerful irony Scott fails to develop to its fullest. Far more important than the comfort of a full stomach, for Charcoal, is the comfort of identity and completion. Rather belatedly for the purposes of effective characterization, Scott shows Charcoal gaining some comfort before his execution from the medicine bag, a symbol of the desired community. By this time in the story however, the lasting impression of Charcoal is that he is a victim of external forces; the equally important inner conflict of desires is largely obscured.

Judged by the question of how well the author envisions his message and how well he conveys that message, the story "Charcoal" must be viewed as a mixed success. Other works show that Scott developed confidence when dealing with psychological behavior, believing that he understood motivations and was capable of rendering their effects upon the actions of people. In these works, a character's actions are consistent in development and assume a logical magnitude in the determination of outcomes. People's lives are guided according to the desires of their choice, and when a character is seen breaking from the circular pattern around the poles of Self and Other, it is usually because he has acted in accordance with his strongest desire. Pierre, the wandering son in the story "The Return," is such a character.

Set in a rural village of Quebec, "The Return" is an inversion of the Biblical story of the return of the prodigal son.[10] For the central character, Pierre, the environment had been a stifling one: as he grew from child to man, he increasingly perceived the traditional values of his community--hard work, the raising of a family, commitment to a home place--as being contrary to his self-interests. He flees but, after many years' absence, returns for what proves to be an unsuccessful reunion with his family and friends.

In "The Return," Scott concentrates on the internal struggle created by conflicting desires, rather than on the dramatics of external conflict, as was the case in "Charcoal." The result is a character, Pierre, who is doomed to a life of seemingly eternal restlessness: most of the time, he follows a desire to be rootless, to wander always without job, home or family. But occasionally he discovers the desire to return to those very same things. When visiting his mother, for example, he says that life on the road is tiring but "that's not so bad as being in one place. I'd rather be tired, dead tired, than to always be like a tree, in one place" (CA, p. 206). Yet his return to his home is more than mere curiosity to see what has gone on in his absence. Desire for the home place is strong and draws him back, almost against his conscious will; once home, he idealizes the desire in a dream:

> He heard the women's voices far away; he thought his mother said, "Every ship has its harbour," and the words soothed him again. Yes, he thought, I'll stay at home now, and I'll marry Olivine; he dozed off. A pleasant picture filled his mind. He remembered a rich farmer who used to drive to mass with his wife, his stout carriage drawn by two fat horses, his many

> children wedged about him. Yes, he would stay at home and become rich also, and drive to mass, and everyone would take off his hat respectfully. (CA, p. 209)

This idyllic picture of home life is appealing only as long as Pierre does not remember that it entails a very real and necessary loss of personal freedom; when his mother wraps his sleeping form with a shawl, an act wonderfully symbolic of a love that is both protective and confining, he is awakened to the implications of his desire. His mother's thoughtful gesture rouses Pierre from his sleep and dream, and he again leaves his family and community for the open road.

Two conclusions about Pierre's behavior may be drawn from the story's ending, and one is voiced by his mother. Upon discovering his disappearance she assumes, perhaps rightly, that this absence, like the last one, will be temporary: "She thought, Yes, my poor Pierre, he will come back; he will come back again." It is not entirely unreasonable to assume that he might continue to feel the alternating forces of desire and periodically repeat the pattern of flight and return, but such an assumption must be made without a consideration of Pierre's own feelings as he flees:

> The effect of the warmth and his physical comfort had vanished. His one idea was to get away. He rose noiselessly. His movements were quick and decided. His thoughts were out on the road. His demon was again mounted, and only the world's end was his desire. (CA, p. 210)

Pierre's face is "altered with passion" and if the world's end is his pole of desire, it is because his Self, threatened by the attractions of involvement with outside interests such as family, needs the anonymity of strange places to be satisfied. What his mother does not realize is that, though he may return, each flight further strengthens his image as an exile and reinforces the attraction of the Self-dominated world. Pierre himself seems to realize how fully his actions are becoming shaped by one kind of desire: before leaving his mother's house, he grabs one of his childhood treasures, a "small leaden image of St. Anthony of Padua." The gesture is futile and sad, for Anthony had in his own time campaigned against vice, and Pierre's actions carry him further and further away from civilized ways and closer and closer to a dark and savage life bordering on criminality.

The significant difference between Pierre and Charcoal is that the Indian's life is jarred by one quick unthinking act, a murder, whereas Pierre's life is being determined by a comparatively deliberate choice of the desires of the Self over those of the Other, or community. The lives of several of Scott's characters show that as a person chooses the Self over Otherness, elements in the outside world reciprocate in kind, pushing the self-exiled one yet further outward. Firmian, in the Untitled Novel, begins his journey into permanent self-exile at an early age, running away from home and parents while still only a boy. His life afterwards is a tale of increasingly antisocial acts which culminate in murder and his permanent sinking into a criminal underworld. His career as an outlaw finally causes his circle of opposing desires to be broken, a pattern of behavior that is repeated by other characters such as Laus in "Tête-Jaune." Laus arouses more sympathy than characters such as Firmian and Pierre because his separation from family and community is not altogether his doing: he is a victim of his father's misunderstanding and unintentional cruelty. Laus, the father's natural son, might never have adopted the circling pattern of exile and return had the father not become obsessed with the bastard son, Tête-Jaune, aptly called "Désiré."

But once begun, Laus's circling becomes ever more pronounced until he kills Désiré and is forced to flee forever the vengeful wrath of law and society. Ironically, Laus's natural and strong desire had been to find identity and place in his family and community, but his course is the same as if he had consciously strived to satisfy the demands of a Self desiring to live isolated from the social context.

The circular pattern of desires is made clearer in the lives of Pierre, Laus, Firmian and Charcoal because inner conflict has an outer correlative that is easily observed. The pattern is also present in the story, "Paul Farlotte," though lacking the drama of murders, chases and extreme personality types. The result is much subtler, and the physical act of circling becomes a circling that is almost entirely psychological and imaginative.

Paul Farlotte is a bachelor teacher whose circle of desires has one pole represented in the story as three related interests or passions. The first is his garden, which he carefully tends to escape the reality of his frustrating teaching job. Another passion is reading the philosopher Montaigne, and the third is dreaming of travelling to France. The interrelatedness of these interests is gradually revealed by the author so that the reader learns, for example, that the trip to France would also be a return to Paul's own birthplace, a pilgrimage to Montaigne's home, and a long-postponed visit to Paul's mother. The proposed trip is planned, and cancelled, every year; it is a gentle obsession that exercises greater influence over Paul's thoughts through the pre-summer months, allowing him to make plans, dream, and forget about the duties of his job. So strong is the projected return that Paul's other world of escape, his garden, becomes informed by a ghostly dream-voice:

> So it came to be a sort of companionship for him, this haunting voice; and sometimes one could have seen him in his garden stretch out his hand and smile, as if he were welcoming an invisible guest. Sometimes the guest was not invisible, but took body and shape, and was a real presence; and often Paul was greeted with visions of things that had been, or that would be, and saw figures where, for other eyes, hung only the impalpable air. (Viger, p. 71)

The voice is revealed at the end of the story as belonging to his mother, and her invisible presence offers him a way to escape his surroundings while imaginatively projecting himself into an ideal future. The stronger his awareness of personal desires becomes (that is, those desires which take an inner direction towards self-satisfaction), the less Paul functions as a part of his outer and immediate world. Visions in the garden, dreams of travelling to France, even the reading of philosophical texts--all are aspects of his private and limiting experience.

The other pole of attraction for Paul comes in the form of concern for his neighbors, the St. Denis family. The children lack a mother or father and the oldest daughter, Marie, is losing her fight to keep the family together emotionally and financially. It is solely because he is concerned with their welfare, we are told, that Paul year after year postpones his trip. The shifting of Paul's interests from those purely concerned with his personal desires, and those concerned with Marie's family is nicely symbolized by the regular and cyclical movement of the sun as it throws a shadow upon the two neighboring houses:

> In the road, just between the two, stood a beautiful Lombardy poplar. Its shadow fell upon the little cottage in the morning, and travelled across the garden, and in the evening touched the corner of the tall house, and faded out with the sun, only to float there again in the moonlight, or to commence the journey next morning with the dawn. This shadow seemed, with its

> constant movement, to figure the connection that existed between the two houses. (Viger, p. 70)

The cycle seems endless, with the movement of the shadow being repeated as surely as Paul's desires move from the pole of Self to the pole of Otherness, Marie's family. Only a crisis in the St. Denis family finally forces Paul to make a choice and break the orbit.

The birth and resolution of the crisis does not occur as a visitation of forces lying outside the lives of the characters, but is a direct result of the interrelatedness of their situation. Marie, knowing that Paul Farlotte always postpones his trip because of her family's needs (he tends their yard and generally looks after maintenance), attempts to organize his preparations for travelling. Though she is selfless in her actions, her concern has unexpected results. She sends a brother, Guy, up into their attic for a trunk which Paul can use for packing, but while Guy is on the errand, he discovers the actual and implicit remnants of his father's fatal obsession, a mechanical invention. Guy, in a re-enactment of his father's behavior. falls prey to the obsession, and Paul, seeing in these events a shadowy version of his own descent into a world of self, inaction and detachment, determines once and for all time to abandon his trip so as to help the St. Denis family. Once Paul has made his decision, he experiences a peaceful satisfaction:

> All night long Monsieur Farlotte walked in his garden, patient and undisturbed, fixing his duty so that nothing could root it out. He found the comfort that comes to those who give up some exceeding deep desire of the heart. . . . (Viger, p. 76)

At last, one desire has overpowered its opposite, so much so that Scott is able to show, symbolically, that Paul's desire associated with the trip to France (including the visit to see his mother) is killed. The dream world of the Self protests against his decision at first, and the voice in the garden grows louder, until:

> Early one morning, as he was working in his garden around a growing pear-tree, he fell into a sort of stupor, and sinking down quietly on his knees he leaned against the slender stem for support. He saw a garden much like his own, flooded with the clear sunlight, in the shade of an arbour an old woman in a white cap was leaning back in a wheeled chair, her eyes were closed, she seemed asleep. (Viger, p. 77)

Paul tells Marie the next day that he knows his mother is dead but the reader, unlike Marie who wonders how Paul could know such a thing, sees the envisioned death as only one representative part of the eclipse of one of Paul's poles of attraction.

The final vision concerning Paul's mother is followed by a description of a number of significant images:

> Gradually the vision faded away, and Paul Farlotte found himself leaning against his pear-tree, which was almost too young as yet to support his weight. The bell was ringing from St. Joseph's, and had shaken the swallows from their nests in the steeple into the clear air. He heard their cries as they flew into his garden, and he heard the voices of his neighbor children as they played around the house. (Viger, p. 77)

Paul, having cast himself from the support of one vision, must find support from another, seen literally, and with figurative significance, as the pear-tree. The pun implied by the sound of "pear" shows Paul's new strength comes from the "paired" situation in which he finds himself with the St. Denis family: the actual physical support of the tree that he tends is analogous to the purpose his life gains from a family he has been helping to support. The image is strengthened by the fact that Scott chooses the pear, which is distinctive among fruits by its shape, as a symbol. The circularity of Paul's previous path of desires is replaced by an enlargement of interest around one pole of interest, an action that approximates the distinctive pear-shape. Hanging downward as it ripens, the shape of the pear forms its own optical illusion of suggestiveness, for it appears that a shifting of weight or mass has taken place, so that the bottom has benefitted from an equal loss of mass at the top of the fruit. In similar fashion, the images following that of the pear demonstrate a flow of significance from the desires of the dream-image of France and mother to the desires concerning the immediate reality of Paul's new-found manhood and fatherhood.

The ringing churchbell radiates an informing sound to Paul's world and originates from a spot named for one of the most famous surrogate fathers of western mythology, Joseph. Swallows fly from the church into Paul's garden, a fact of no particular importance unless the reader considers that these are "the" swallows and remembers that the only others mentioned in the story were described by Paul as having nested in the eaves of his childhood home in France. Flying through time and levels of consciousness, the birds signal the departure from governing childish desires and visions to those of adult commitment. The vision of the child who was Paul himself is replaced by the present voices of the St. Denis children playing next door.

On a very literal level, Paul's example shows how a man who never has children will forever be limited, in a biological and psychological sense, to being someone else's child. As such a man, Paul strives through most of the story to regain an idealized relationship with his mother; idealized, because the closeness he desires was probably never a fact. He yearns for a past where he is the perfect and only child to a perfect and only parent. No other realities can intrude upon this dreaming past, and so no mention of a father is ever made in Paul's recollections. Obviously, even if Paul had never known his father, his own birth is undeniable evidence that his mother once shared her affections with someone other than her son, and so the dream visions of her and France are better than the intuited truth.

Paul does become a "father," however, as he assumes a commitment that forces him to give up this dream vision of his mother, his child-self, and his "exceeding deep desire of the heart." Scott had playfully foreshadowed the change in Paul's life by placing in the midst of the idealized thoughts on France the mention of the essayist, Montaigne. In the context of the story, the brief and vague reference brings to mind the skeptical philosopher's belief that one should follow the best that is in nature by living a life both good and harmonious with one's environment.[11] The idealized figure of Montaigne acts as a subconscious modification of the desired dream-vision, and a reminder of the desire for community and commitment to the reality of immediate Otherness.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, bipolar paths of movement represent one of the uses of the circle shape in Scott's writing; the second use is a physical manifestation, expressed as object, place or situation, which carries from one work to another a certain consistency of symbolic meaning. Few critics have examined the use of this imagery in quite the same way as Kathy Mezei:

> The predominant and most interesting spatial manifestation of Scott's search for the magic space lies in the metaphoric use and frequent juxtaposition of circles and heights. . . . The circle, symbol of divinity, eternity, totality, the psyche, may represent a fruitful and joyous eternity in the form of a green cloister or circle of affection, or it may portend the

> deadly eternity of a lifeless pool or gothic chamber. Because the circle itself is a duality and contains the contradiction of a still, fixed centre and a moving, infinite circumference forever seeking reconciliation, it is a perfect image of paradox. It thus becomes an apt expression of Scott's troubled queries about the nature of existence.[12]

Mezei's interpretation has certain problems that arise out of her general critical orientation, which seems to be psychoanalytic. She attempts to categorize circles as being somehow "feminine" and heights as being "masculine," evidently because the former bring to mind enclosed or protected womb-like spaces and the latter suggest erect or dramatic penile projections, but she fails to show that Scott had these sexual relationships in mind when he employed the images. Worse, having introduced the implicit duality of circles and heights on a sexual basis, Mezei neglects to develop any sense of either conflict or complementarity existing in their relationship, preferring instead to treat the images as isolated instances in Scott's work. The value in her study lies in her recognition of the systematic use of an image throughout the writer's body of work. She sees, for example, bodies of water such as pools having an introspective meaning for the poet:

> To penetrate the depths of a pool or the seas in which many of Scott's persona drown . . . is to symbolically penetrate the black and forbidding recesses of the subconscious or the poetic source. But some knowledge is too great to bear and death is the only end; the dark pool, shadowy reflection of self and the world, holds a fatal attraction. . . .[13]

It is this paradoxical joining of the achievement of desire with the awful certainty of death which characterizes Scott's use of the circle image. That this union is expressed frequently in sexual terms is a fact that Mezei knows is in the work, but does not discuss adequately with regard to Scott's views on the artist and his art.

Scott's early work shows the influence of major current literary conventions and ideas, and Kathy Mezei draws attention to the way in which Scott's pool imagery is drawn from Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites. But, in general, neither she nor other critics have noted the influence that is revealed in "From the Farm on the Hill," a poem from _The Magic House_:

> Break, O anguish of nature
> Into some glorious sound
> Let me touch the next circle of being
> For I have compassed this life.[14]

The poetic persona in this poem sees the world in terms of Emerson's concentric circles of being and the movement outward is governed by the speaker's subjective perception. The lines are, however, from an early poem and though circles remain a dominant image for Scott, he becomes increasingly concerned in later works with the idea of one circle as the expression of experience, seeing the image as a condition or situation that embodies the positive and negative characteristics of desire. There is no need, Scott comes to believe, to envision movement from one circle of being to another: all of life, from creation to death, may be symbolically rendered as taking place within a single circle.

The story "Paul Farlotte," besides making use of circularity as pattern, reveals a transitional use of the circle as concrete shape and symbolic space. A mixture of usage occurs in the depiction of Paul's garden and house:

> . . . a low cottage, surrounded by a garden, and covered with roses, which formed jalousies for the encircling veranda. The garden was laid out with the care and completeness that told of a master hand. The cottage itself had the air of having been secured from the inroads of time as thoroughly as paint and a nail in the right place at the right time could effect that end. (_Viger_, p. 70)

Man stands at the center of this scene, surrounded in succession by circles of house, veranda, garden and the world, but though Scott retains the physical image of concentric circles from earlier works such as "From the Farm on the Hill," the meaning of the structure is different in the story. The encirclement is in fact a multi-walled stronghold of subjective desires which strives to limit how much of the outside world is going to get in: jalousies or blinds filter in light, protecting the viewer from the full glare of realities, and this is exactly what Paul's rosegarden does for him. The circle as an enclosed space protects something within, in this case, the cherished articles of Paul's imagination. The garden circle is joined by another important circular image, the seed. In poems such as "The Vision," the seed image is used to show continuity from the past to the present, and in "Paul Farlotte," a similar usage occurs:

> The garden of the cottage was a marvel; there the finest roses in the parish grew, roses which people came miles to see, and parterres of old-fashioned flowers, the seed of which came from France, and which in consequence seemed to blow with a rarer colour and more delicate perfume. (Viger, p. 70)

Seeds carry an essence, and though specific plants may live and die, their essential life-quality is passed through time. This particular aspect of the seed appealed to Scott, who used the image often when he wished to sum up a philosophical statement. In "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris," for instance, he rejects artistic pessimism and offers in its stead his own source of inspiration:

> herein the clue,
> The love of life--yea, and the peerless love
> Of things not seen, that leads the least of things
> To cherish the green sprout, the hardening seed;
> Here leans all nature with vast Mother-love,

> Above the cradled future with a smile.
> Why are there tears for failure, or sighs for weakness,
> While life's rhythm beats on? (Poems, p. 148)

Scott employs a rather circular argument--life is good because we are alive--because he is forced to accept the repetition of history which in itself guarantees no fulfillment of human desires. For this reason, he tends to see the unsprouted seed, the folded flower, and the peacefully dark human heart as versions of a protected or virginal goodness.

If we recall for a moment the bipolar paths of desire enacted by many of his characters and poetic personnae, Scott's use of the unipolar circle of desire becomes clearer. In works such as the lyric "Lilacs and Hummingbirds" Scott is expressing a personal ideal of beauty, a vision the artist comes to realize is a cloistered one. Even if the poet tries to reveal the objective beauty of the world, Scott knows, the mere act of resorting to the concept of beauty as an ideal reveals a selective mind at work. In "Lilacs and Hummingbirds," the circular shape is a nest at the center of a scene, and nests frequently appear in his poems as secluded places of beauty and peace. An actual bird's nest is seen in "The Tree, the Birds, and the Child," where robins tend eggs in the "ambushed crotch" of a birch, and a figurative nest of flowers is depicted in "A Nest of Hepaticas," but the effect is the same: we see a personal precious object hidden away from the light and strife of the world. Moving from the outer generalities of a scene to the details of the center, the poet in "Lilacs and Hummingbirds" creates a vivid visual and emotional effect:

Lace-like in the moonlight,
The white lilac tree was quiet,
A little form of dream delight
Within a dreaming scene,
Like a little bride of shadow
In a dim secluded eyot,
With perfume for an element
Around the white and green.

The secret of this dream delight,
The core of this bride-quiet,
Hid even from the moonlight
By the heart-leaved screen,
Was the dew encrusted jewel
Of a ruby-throat, and nigh it
A nest of sleeping humming-birds
Amid the white and green. (Poems, p. 76)

The poem exists as a caught moment, a timeless perfection of peace and beauty that the poet has succeeded in closing off from chaos, decay, and death. The eyot, or little island, of darkness holds the highest desire of Scott's artistic Self, the desire both to have and to hold forever the joys of bridal perfection or beauty.

If the reader accepts the immediate context of the lyric, that is, its subjective sense of absolute qualities, he misses the implicit paradoxical message of the lines. The phrase "bride-quiet," for instance, is a direct allusion to Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and the "still unravished bride of quietness."[25] Keats saw in his urn the evidence of the triumph of art over time; Scott inverts this message by creating a similar object of seeming perfection, the scene of hummingbirds and lilacs, and by choosing images with meanings potentially contradictory to the stated content of the poem. The "bride-quiet" of Scott's scene, for example, is a function of the moment, of darkness and seclusion, but darkness will give way to dawn, the birds presumably will stir, and the dreaming scene will yield to daylight realities. The bride of his coined word will be ravished. Scott has created a work which, if accepted as a message of static values, achieves a mood of perfection and peace; if, however, its implications are fully accepted by the reader, the work is a study of self-destruction. This aspect of Scott's work, an aesthetic that not only accepts the death of art and beauty but which also claims some responsibility for that transience, emerges as a problem that is never entirely resolved. In one work, "The Water-Lily," he obviously wishes for his bride of desire to be both virginal and ravished at the same time, and so he creates in the poem's ending a sense of sexual and visual illusion.

Seen in a hot shallow pool, where it floats among "throbbing circles" of other blossoms, the water-lily is flawless, a picture of beauty, a "virgin lily." As an expression of the artist's desire to envision perfection, the lily in the opening lines of the poem attains the same bride-like quality of timelessness and beauty as was found in "Lilacs and Hummingbirds."

But Scott soon sets out to qualify the picture of perfect virginal beauty, at first with only a hint of something being out of place in the scene:

> Thicker the water-beetles ply their oars
> Freighting between the phantom shores
> The little evil thoughts that trouble beauty;
> But heedless the haughty lily
> Buoyed in the lymph-clear shallows
> Languorously. . . . (Poems, p. 198)

Just what the "little evil thoughts" are is never made clear, but their presence immediately precedes, and therefore seems linked to, the awakening of desire within the flower:

The intense heaven of her cold white
Is troubled with colour;
The shadow cast by light
On its own substance lies;
The clear etherealities
Are tremoured with fire;
Conscious and still unconscious of the sun,
The petals swoon amorously;
The gold-tipped sceptres of desire
Shine in the warm cradle-cup
Of the luxurious pure lily
Trembling in ecstasy by the lotus leaves. (Poems, p. 198)

Desire, figured as a yearning towards the sunlight, becomes the primary force in the poem as "Maturity broods in water and air." The very essence of the flower's being seeks a path which will leave behind its virginal whiteness and purity as the lily begins to sense its cloistered state is actually a prison:

O banishment to cloistral water,
The pause in the limpid hush,
There to recreate
The form, the odour, the flush.
Then the lyrical impulse,
The stem goes rocketing
To kiss spring light,
The pointed bud parts,
The garden lies in ecstasy
Conscious of the starry wonder
That opens--opens--opens--
The odour overflows--
Comes the under-flush-- (Poems, p. 199)

A. J. M. Smith, commenting on the poem's sexual content, correctly senses a certain ambivalence in the poet's attitudes:

> There is a strange and very powerful fusion of whiteness and coldness with passionate, almost tropical, ardours and odours that serves to dramatize what I feel is the hidden theme of the poem--the presentation of an ambivalent attitude towards virginity. (DCS, p. 124)

Because he sees some reasonable similarities between "The Water-Lily" and "Spring on Mattagami," Smith is led to conclude that Scott entertained a sexual dualism towards virginity, a simultaneous attraction and repulsion towards the sexual experience. I think Smith grasps only part of the ramifications of this "hidden theme."

Smith says that the end of the poem is a depiction of "ecstatic joy, consummation, release, and rest," but an examination of the lines in comparison to other sections of the work shows that he neglects the full implications of the conclusion. The lines read:

> The stately lily lolls again,
> Pale water-lily,
> Languorously floating by the lotus leaves. (_Poems_, p. 199)

Certainly there is everything Smith says there is in this passage which suggests the aftermath of sexual encounter, but missing from the description is any sense of a lasting, substantial change, of a transformation from innocence to experience, from the virginal to the ravished. Instead, the scene and the language used are exactly the same as the scene and language used earlier in the poem to describe the lily's virginal state. Again, she is "pale," she "lolls" and she is seen "Languorously floating." By choosing to depict the transformations of the water-lily, Scott is able to accomplish symbolically two rather extraordinary things: first, he is able to create a sensuality that nevertheless remains pristine even in full experience and, second, he creates a work which, because it returns to the desired state of perfected beauty, conquers the kinds of implications of transience found in "Lilacs and Hummingbirds." The "rest" following a sexual release which Smith found at the end of the poem is in fact Scott's attempt to create a "still unravished bride of quietness," a "bride-quiet" of aesthetic permanence that can experience and yet transcend the awakening of the birds and the parting of the bud.

In terms of the sexual and artistic themes, "The Water-Lily" is an expression of the attainment of ideals, the realization of desires. The flower opens wide its circle of selfhood to the outside world of experience, but somehow maintains its desire for original identity. The flower has not travelled around the bipolar route of Self and Other, because it has been able to draw the awareness of Otherness inside its single-poled circle of being. While the desire to maintain the Self is successful in this poem, other works show that Scott may have felt that the example of the water-lily was, sadly, an exception in the world of experience.

Desire may be defined as the awareness of a lack in one's existence. A subjectively ideal fulfillment or structure of conditions is yearned for, and because of this dream of desire, the Self is sad and restless, like Paul Farlotte before his harmonious entry into the world of commitment. In a significant number of works, desire remains as a dominant force in the imagination, with the result that a character or poetic persona must live with deep sorrow. This psychic scar, abiding sorrow, is shown in the poem "Permanence" through the figure of a statue. Hands upstretched in supplication, the statue is all that remains of a civilization which dreamed of attaining, and holding, ideals:

> Set within a desert lone,
>   Circled by an arid sea,
> Stands a figure carved in stone,
>   Where a fountain used to be.
>
> Two abraded, pleading hands
>   Held below a shapeless mouth,
> Human-like the fragment stands,
>   Tortured by perpetual drouth. (_Poems_, p. 265)

The statue is surrounded by a pseudo-sea of desert sand, a symbolic rendering of desires which, having gone "dry," remain to tease and torture:

> Now no rain dissolves and cools,
>   Dew is even as a dream,
> The enticing far-off pools
>   In a mirage only seem. (Poems, p. 265)

The circle of arid sea is a lack, an enclosure of Otherness which the Self has tried to assimilate and failed. Though not a real sea, this inverted water-image is consistent with Scott's use in other works of the ocean as an image of that part of the world which resists and, in resisting, frustrates the desires of the Self.

Water, though sometimes a life-giving element, is often with Scott a terrifying, chaotic place that reminds the viewer of that most dramatic proof of the world's otherness: death. Even if death itself is not intimated by the image, water is frequently a vast encircling element of confusion, chaos and lack of identity: the Piper of Arll loses himself beneath the waves of the sea, the headless Indian disappears under water, and the canoeist feels lost and overwhelmed on Lake Nipigon. The personae of these works look out into the watery void, hoping to find some sense there, some vision of the world which will make the Otherness tame and familiar. The result, as in "Rapids at Night," is at best a mingling of desire and sorrow. The speaker of the poem stands near a mountain stream, hearing in its sound some correlative for his own feelings:

> Here rise up the clangorous sounds of battle,
> Immense and mournful,
> Far above curves the great dome of darkness
> Drawn with the limitless lines of the stars and the
>   planets.
> Deep at the core of the tumult,
> Deeper than all the voices that cry at the surface,

> Dwells one fathomless sound,
> Under the hiss and cry, the stroke and the plangent
>   clamour.
>
> O human heart that sleeps,
> Wild with rushing dreams and deep with sadness! (_Poems_, p. 19)

Two encircled centers are seen in the poem: the human heart and the one deepest sound of the stream. The wild rushing dreams of the human heart constitute the desire to feel truly and accept man's place of peace in the universe or in the "strong palm of God," but this peace is not easily gained. Though the speaker aspires to a belief grounded in the Law and Light described in the last lines of "Spring on Mattagami," his intellectual ideals must admit the presence of personal emotional disappointment or sorrow in a world that deals chaos and death to the artist's desire for identity and order. The poet, having come to nature looking for a sense of place and peace among the "ancient laws," finds only an echo of his own inner turmoil, a battlefield releasing one deep voice which speaks the universal truth of the sadness that is at the heart of all things.

Although Scott evidently had in mind certain phrases from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" when he wrote "Rapids at Night," he holds a view slightly different from his Victorian predecessor. Arnold, observing "The Sea of Faith" ebbing from his world, felt the loneliness of his time as an "eternal note of sadness" and the ensuing spiritual anxiety as a great struggle:

> And we are here as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.[16]

While Scott also studies the question of man's being, and also is impressed by the chaos of the world and his own recognition of the "eternal note of sadness" that perception discovers, his response does not follow Arnold's lead. Arnold, overwhelmed by what he perceives, withdraws from the world by appealing to a like-minded person at his side: together the poet and his companion will seek peace and identity against the "confused alarms" of their world. Scott does not seek the consoling and self-affirming presence of another, nor does he see the problem of faith in terms of an external metaphor. With Arnold, the truth of the world forces itself upon human consciousness, the waves "bring/ The eternal note of sadness in"; with Scott, the truth of the world is discovered to reside within the very circle of the Self which wishes to live with a keen awareness of a union of the rest of the world, but which instead "sleeps" just as the Indian guides slept while the poet in "The Height of Land" prepared for his journey to higher spiritual levels. Scott does not say when or if man will "awake," suggesting only in poems such as "The Height of Land" that while a future growth of spiritual understanding is possible, in the meantime man must live with desires that will not be still and sorrows that will not lighten.

The linking of desires with sorrow is a continuing theme with Scott, one which finds frequent expression in the imaginative subject's response to the sea. In a number of poems that are variations upon the same idea, Scott associates the sea with the necessity to admit the defeat of hope and desire. The central mood of these works is the deep "sadness" found in "Rapids at Night." In "By the Seashore," for instance, Scott identifies the sea as "The Mother of Sorrow." A man is depicted standing on a beach at night burning letters and, with them, "his desire." At the poem's conclusion, a voice from the sea speaks to the man, asking for the ashes because "The sea is the Mother of Sorrow/ And She will remember"

(GC, p. 68).

Though the subject of "Rapids at Night" is spiritual questioning and the subject of "By the Seashore" is human love and loss, both poems are concerned with human desire, and the second offers a definition of the workings of desire that seems applicable to the first. After having said that desire is destroyed with the letters being burned, the poet establishes a more complex definition of desire:

> Men have likened desire to a fire,
> But it bears no final likeness to fire;
> The desire of the heart leaves sorrow that lives in a scar,
> But fire when it dies is nought. (GC, p. 67)

Memory makes the lack that is desire eternal, and in two other similar sea poems, "By the Sea" and "By the Shore," the poetic speaker confronts his suffering as if it is a necessity. In "By the Shore" the speaker resolutely ignores the sea's ability to inform the imagination with joy, as he asks of the rippling waves:

> Is all that you can tell me,
>   As you waver and sparkle and glance,
> That after the scourge of tempest
>   You still can laugh and dance? (Poems, p. 249)

The poet has come to the shore with his mind made up, the sea is to act as a reminder of his isolation and loss:

> My heart is bitter with sorrow
>   For the years that are long gone,
> There is no consolation
>   That I may dwell upon. (Poems, p. 248)

If the sense in these lines is that the poet is somehow powerless to avoid the pain of sorrow, Scott makes his intention undeniably clear in another poem, "By the Sea." Again, a speaker stands before the sea, but this time he comes expressly to avoid pain:

Why comes this sorrow from the outer void
To check my heart with a vague agony
When it would dance in pleasure unalloyed
Or dream without desire or memory? (GC, p. 61)

When memory does summon the linked emotions of desire and sorrow, Scott likens the feeling to a tide which, even if he could, he would not resist:

Yet would I not command the tide to be
Motionless water, nor by will restrain
The current of vague sorrow, nor decree
Peace to my heart from this reviving pain.
No, I would cleave it open to the core
For the remorseless surge to flood once more. (GC, p. 61)

In these lines the speaker's relationship to the sea image is not that of joining of the Self with a representation of a vast surrounding Other for the purposes of fulfillment or completion; rather, there is a sense of a meeting of entities that results in acute personal loss. By their juxtaposition, and even by the flooding of the persona's sensibilities by the sea image, the essential difference of the two identities is heightened. Though the poet claims to be opening himself to emotions inimical to his desires, the result in poems such as "By the Seashore," "By the Sea" and "By the Shore" is not a true assimilation or a harmonious commingling, but a painful, uneasy mixing of experiences. The stoic in Scott may seek an emotional reconciliation, but the emotional self in him resembles the statue in the poem "Permanence," a time-worn figure encircled by an alien and abrading sea.

To say that circular images became an obsession with Scott towards the end of his life would be inaccurate, but only because the word obsession describes a certain loss of psychological discipline that Scott probably never suffered. Aesthetically, however, the circle image becomes something of a fixity, a symbolic structure that carries significant weight (sometimes more than it can handle) in the final collected works.

Scott's last collection of work appeared in 1947, the year of his death. The Circle of Affection has all the appearances of a tidying up, of a somewhat self-indulgent act on the part of a man who knows he is about to die. Included are poetry, stories and essays, works from the early and late years, selections that are very good ("At Delos") and choices that are very bad ("Farewell to Their Majesties"). E. K. Brown, understandably worried that some of the inferior works would tarnish Scott's reputation, evidently tried to dissuade his old friend from proceeding with the project as planned.[17] Scott ignored the advice, and his reasons for doing so are partially revealed in the "Foreword" to the book:

> The intention of the whole was to bring together later work in prose and verse, prose which had become inaccessible, and early stories and poems which had not previously appeared in book form. The title for the collection, borrowed from the opening story, seemed to the writer appropriate, for throughout the book a circle of affection is gradually rounded: an affection for persons and places, for his own country and other countries, an affection for moods, for passions and aspirations. (CA, p. xi)

Though the author claims that the arrangement of works reveals a kind of order that "brings the circle to completion," he also admits that this idea may be "imaginary, a possession of the writer alone." The word "possession" is the key here. Scott is right: there is only a vague relationship of themes, images and structures in the book and the only real unifying characteristic of The Circle of Affection lies in the author's stated intention to "possess" his work in a certain way. Though his use of the word "possession" alludes to a capacity for self-delusion, it is also true that Scott chooses the works to be collected because he thinks they are representative of the range of his artistic and emotional experiences. Thus, he wishes to demonstrate the clear manner with which he holds or possesses his work. This kind of control is important to establish at this point in his career, because it means the difference between being forgotten and being remembered as an artist with a unified vision. While personal fame is not his chief concern, Scott still desires to see some aspect of himself--his work--achieve immortality. It is this sense of a lasting essence that he hopes to communicate in the "Foreword" and which he wishes to reveal in the title story, "The Circle of Affection."

Glenn Clever refers to "The Circle of Affection" as a story about a "genteel family in the Ottawa of the 1870's [that] minuets to time and death," and Scott does apply a satirically humorous brush when depicting the activities of the Maggs family.[18] But gentle social satire does not inform the tale as strongly as two other authorial concerns: the desire to reveal the ideal of love, and the desire to reveal the nature of strong individual drives toward sexual expression. These two desires deserve study because they are the central thematic statements of the story and therefore may be viewed as reflecting the artist's emphasis of ideas in this late collection of work. However, the analysis of the author's desires or intentions in the work also reveals an irresolution or ambiguity in the execution of these ideas, a fact which has just as great a relevance as a consideration of themes to an understanding of a governing aesthetic.

The main characters in "The Circle of Affection" are members of the Maggs family: the Reverend John Maggs, his daughter Julia, and their dog Tasso. Together, they make up the special circle referred to in the story's title. The affection linking these figures provides them security and warmth, but it also severely limits their ability to perceive and grow. Julia, for example, addresses her father as "Reverend Darling," a term which ironically reveals her inability to see that, both as a father and as a minister, he is severely limited by blind adherence to dogmatic principles. Similarly, the Reverend cannot see past his love for her to the fact that, far from being the musical talent he thinks she is, his daughter possesses indifferent abilities. Both father and daughter lack practical sense to such a great degree that, when the dog Tasso dies, they allow his corpse to rot while they worry about a fitting method of burial.

The weaknesses of the Maggs family are comical, even ridiculous in the case of Tasso's death, but Scott's main purpose in the story is not satire. He wishes to show that the simplicity of behavior and emotion is nevertheless a surface under which greater significances lie. Love, as seen in the family's circle of affection, has a simple and warm form, but the outward simplicity of its appearance points to a more complex and eternal meaning that is revealed by two deaths, those of Tasso and the Reverend.

When the beloved Tasso dies, his place in the family is quickly filled by another dog who looks like the original and who soon receives the same name. When the Reverend dies, he is replaced in the same manner. Julia, who has made her father the center of her very small universe for so long, transfers her affections with astonishing speed to another man as soon as she suspects her father's death. Julia has evidently learned well the lesson implied in Tasso's earlier death and succession by another: while the love object possesses immediate and powerful importance, the loving or the love relationship is even more important; the circle of affection must retain its form though the individual parts may change. And so, at the very moment that Julia realizes her father has died, she rushes to greet the new man in her life, a potential lover, with the words "Abner, Abner Darling, come, come quickly . . ." (CA, p. 18). The endearing form of address, along with the love that forms the circle of affection, is shifted to a new love object with amazing ease.

Too much ease, perhaps. Credibility is severely strained by the way in which the psychological patterns of individual behavior are altered, illogically, to fit the demands of Scott's theoretical framework. Ideal love, he is saying, transcends individuality, and so Julia's behavior evidently escapes the charge of fickleness because it is informed with a higher, though unconscious, awareness of the ideal. The problem with taking this course, for the author, is that the individual patterns of behavior present in the story are too strong, in both their obvious and their latent forms, to conform comfortably to this larger framework. Scott needs characters who can be subsumed by the needs of the plot, but a character such as Abner Tudhope, Julia's suitor, refuses to recede into the narrative fabric.

Abner, who delivers milk to the Maggs family, tells the Reverend and his daughter that he wishes to become an astrologer. This detail of character information, though never developed to any great extent, is important because his interest in the stars helps to establish Abner as one who lies outside the Christian, genteel sphere the Maggs occupy. He is a shadowy seducer who evidently follows few accepted guidelines of behavior and who has made Julia the object of his desires. Taken in this light, his gift of the dog to replace the one that has died is not a simple act of kindness, but a calculated attempt to gain entry into the closed circle of affection.

If the complexity of Abner's motivations is too easily dismissed because he is a relatively minor character occupying little of the author's narrative attentions, then the similar complexity of Julia's character may be overlooked because her actions are understated and symbolic. Her growth as a sexually aware person is marked by several incidents of supposedly accidental self-revelation. The first of these incidents is incorporated into the introductory profile of Julia, and follows a descriptive passage concerning her father:

> His daughter devised her own fashion of dress which suited her; the only trouble was to keep her mass of golden hair under her hat, for she was secretly proud of its colour, its length and its weight, and she did not want everyone to stare if it suddenly fell down, as had happened once or twice on the street. (CA, p. 3)

The duality of desire within Julia is here clearly stated: she wishes for recognition of her self in terms that are sensuous and potentially sensual, yet she experiences a counter-desire to keep this personal dimension secret or virginal. What promises to be the deciding factor between these opposing forces is the physical fact of her self, represented by her hair, which seems to insist upon its own revelation.

Having established Julia's sexual potential, Scott provides for the introduction of an external stimulus aimed at awakening this potential, the young man named Abner Tudhope. Her father knows that Julia's innocence is likely to be assailed from outside their "circle" (apparently he is unaware of her own steady and natural growth out of childhood), and so he is naturally vigilant:

> Julia had never been taught by her mother and had never known the advantage or disadvantage of a schoolroom; she was a treasure to be watched and guarded. . . . (CA, p. 5)

The Reverend is immediately suspicious when his daughter announces that they have a new milkman, "much younger and stronger," in her words. Abner's occupation is in itself of symbolic importance to Julia's growing sexual self: his work involves handling the essence of female fecundity, milk, and he is bringing it to her or, in effect, is confronting her with a sign of her potentiality. This symbolic process is made quite clear in a confrontation scene involving the two young people.

Attracted to the new delivery man in a way she does not understand, Julia waits for his regular visits:

> Led by the physical delight of seeing this vigorous youth rearrange the heavy milk-cans, or leap from the vehicle with the quart measure and with a supply of the fluid in a small can, Julia found herself even waiting for him, looking from the window with the milk-jug ready. One bright morning she saw him deliberately and thoroughly stir the contents of one of the large cans with the butt of his whip. She was angry when she opened the door to his familiar triple knock.
>
> "One quart, please; you shouldn't have done that, it's filthy."
>
> "Done what?"
>
> "Stir up the milk with your dirty whip-stock." He was surprised and stopped whistling.
>
> "Oh! All right, Julia, I won't do it again." She was very angry.
>
> "How dare you call me Julia? I would never think of calling you by your first name."
>
> "You may call me Abner if you want to." He did not seem at all embarrassed and went off whistling as usual. (CA, pp. 9-10)

The sexual imagery employed in the scene is not extraordinary; the violation of the white purity of female essence by a stiff shaft made from materials taken from an eminently male figure seems quite acceptable within a literary tradition of psychological symbolism, though a writer in Scott's time might have thought the practice daring. Scott seems to be having fun with the scene: as Julia returns indoors flushed and disturbed by the milk-stirring incident, her father cautions her to be careful, "Don't spill the milk." The father's mundane concern results in an unconscious humor because he dimly senses that his daughter's sexual potential is reaching full measure and is in danger of spilling over.

What is less easily discerned than the general meaning of the sexual imagery in the scene is the actual cause and meaning behind Julia's anger: she does not say that Abner has no business stirring the milk, that he was not directed to do it, she is not even objecting specifically to the use of the inappropriate tool, the whipstock. Her objection is that the act is "filthy" and "dirty." Confronted with the figurative foreshadowing of her initiation to sexual experience, Julia's desire to maintain cloistered innocence emerges as a condemning voice, just as her falling hair was met by a desire to keep the tresses covered and secret. When Abner uses her first name, she similarly objects to the growing familiarity and, therefore, the implicit invasion of her private world.

Through Julia's character, Scott demonstrates the conflict between a desire to reveal and a desire to conceal, to experience and to remain innocent. Because her predicament is similar to that of the flower in "The Water-Lily" the reader might well conclude with A. J. M. Smith that Scott held a rather ambivalent view of virginity, but an important clue in "The Circle of Affection" suggests that Scott wishes to illuminate an aesthetic problem while revealing a sexual dilemma.

I use the term "clue" with reference to the use of the name "Tasso" in the story because I believe that the author was not at all clear in his own mind about how obvious he wished to be about such things as the latent content of the scenes involving Julia and Abner. The name Tasso, an unusual one for a dog, is included unobtrusively in this story the way the name Montaigne was included in "Paul Farlotte": if the reader chooses to take the name merely as part of the atmosphere of the narrative, the work's general effectiveness is not lessened; if, however, the reader attempts to see the reference as a means to illuminating certain character actions and possibly authorial stance, the story gains a complexity in meaning.

The poet Torquanto Tasso is best known for the epic, Jerusalem Delivered, which is an account of the Christian forces during one of the Crusades. Any link between this epic and Scott's writing is very obscure, with one distinct exception not exactly germane to this specific discussion: certain scenes of violence and mutiliation bear a striking resemblance to passages in "Powassan's Drum."[19] A more likely connection with regard to "The Circle of Affection" is found in the details of Tasso's own life.

Romantic poets such as Byron, who wrote "The Lament of Tasso," were attracted to the artist because Tasso felt socially alienated, personally unloved, and historically separated from the culture of the past he admired.[20] As a representative figure of the suffering artist, Tasso was all the more complete because he experienced great guilt with regard to the writing of Jerusalem Delivered; the epic, he feared, had overshadowed the intended message of Christian faith by placing too great an emphasis upon the forces of human love.[21]

Scott may well have noticed in the troubled concerns of Tasso certain parallels to his own situation, especially with regard to an interest in the development of Christianity and to a concern with defining the artist's relationship to his art and society. While these considerations have validity in judging how Scott is using the name of Tasso in the story, I think it is more valuable to concentrate on the perceived problem of emphasis in Jerusalem Delivered. Scott, like Tasso, is working on the problematic relationships between ideals and practices in human behavior and, like his Italian predecessor, probably recognized the extent to which the psychological and sexual dimensions of love in some of his works had greater force than the ideals that supposedly governed the works. Even that most important symbol of idealism in "The Circle of Affection," the circle, has its impact greatly undercut by the dramatic individual circles of self-growth and self-interest manifested by the behavior of Julia and Abner.

Ambivalence, which Scott can use to advantage when he wishes to show the necessary interrelatedness of order and disorder, can become a dangerous kind of ambiguity in a story such as "The Circle of Affection." Scott maintains that the circle of affection is unbroken at the story's conclusion, that the individual substitution of Abner for the father is as superficial a change as the substitution of the first dog Tasso by the second. But the reader cannot accept this analogy simply because the sexual growth of Julia is too vital a part of the story to be ignored. The sensual Abner will not play the part of the Reverend Darling to Julia's little girl self, and even she must realize this. The story which Scott had chosen because he thought it somehow exemplified the gathering or possession of his artistry becomes, ironically, chief evidence against accepting that the author himself believed that he was in full control of his art. Uncertainty of a different but related kind occurs in a work included in the "Early Short Stories" section of The Circle of Affection, "A Night in Cordoba."

The narrator of "A Night in Cordoba" is actually a composite figure made up of three people: his daytime conscious self, his dreaming self and his doubled dream self in the form of an imprisoned artist. A brief plot summary shows the way in which Scott presents the three on a manifest level, while establishing the symbolic definition of a journey motif. Travelling by train to Cordoba, the narrator takes a room for the night. While asleep, he dreams about an artist who appears as a prisoner forced to draw the likeness of a severed head. The story concludes with the narrator awaking feeling vaguely satisfied with his dream and, after paying his bill for the room, resuming his trip. Beneath the manifest journey structure of the tale lies a psychological journey which shows the composite narrator's actions informed by a desire to avoid the final implications of experience and insight. The theme of avoidance is introduced immediately through one of Scott's favorite scenarios, the clash of cultural sensibilities.

The narrator is a Canadian travelling in a foreign land, Spain, and the mood of his perceptions is marked by anxiety and alienation. The train he rides becomes "ominously crowded" with local citizens and the very air has an unclear meaning that seems to contain a desire to inform experience:

> It was late in May, and, filling all the sky, was the ringing bell-note of Spanish sunlight. One could not escape from its vibration, mild, but penetrating, that went through the landscape, through the people and your own being with a quiet persistence. It seemed a medium in which life was floated, like a silent music under the main complexity of an audible music. (CA, p. 223)

Both the daylight and the growing crowd of humanity on the train appear to the narrator as near yet somehow removed from his understanding. Part of this inability to grasp the meaning of his situation is attributed to the fact that he is the "one dumb Canadian" in a crowd of natives, a man who is unfamiliar with the underlying "silent music" of the foreign culture. But another part of the narrator's feeling of strangeness arises out of his refusal to engage himself with the new surroundings. On the train, he assumes that since the Spanish crowds are on a holiday the people should be festive and he is disappointed when they are not; later in Cordoba he similarly assumes that the people are indifferent not only to him but to their own happiness. Both assumptions are due to the narrator's failure to investigate the nature of the phenomena he witnesses. All he knows, or cares to know, about the holiday is that it is "some sort of annual fair, complicated with a bull fight." The narrator's actual waking self refuses involvement and experience, an act which is mirrored by his dreaming self in the extended dream sequence which takes place that evening in a Cordoba room.

When describing the dream, the narrator wishes to make clear the fact that his part in the experience is that of a detached objective observer. He describes himself as watching a scene in which an artist-figure bound in chains appears, accompanied by a procession of soldiers and other officials. A member of the procession, a page, reaches into a bag and pulls out a severed human head, which the artist immediately begins to sketch. Throughout the scene, the narrator maintains an aloofness, saying that he was "quietly contemplating a scene that was suspended before my eyes. . . ." That this sense of detachment is important to him is clear, since he soon repeats the message: "I was a musing spectator, curious, not at all apprehensive" (CA, p. 226). In light of similar denials of involvement by characters such as Archibald Muir in "Labrie's Wife," the Canadian traveller's statements should be judged with caution, if not with the clear conviction that Scott is using dramatic irony.

Evidence in favor of reading the narrative ironically is individually slight but cumulatively compelling. The repeated denial of involvement has, for example, the ironic effect of asserting anxiety rather than emotional calm. Too, because the sleeping self is a dreaming traveller, his situation and attendant lack of insight have a structural parallel to the "one dumb Canadian" who blunders through Spain. Finally, when the narrator awakes the next day and settles his account with his guide, the two men share a moment of humor:

> Settlement was made with Miguel de Molina in broad daylight.
>
> "I hope the gentleman had a good night?"
>
> "Excellent."
>
> "The bed?"
>
> "Impeccable!"
>
> "The charge you think now altogether not too, too scandalous?" A peculiar shadow came into his eyes.
>
> "No, after all, Don Miguel de Molina, it was not too, too scandalous." (CA, p. 228)

The guide knew that the room was haunted, according to local "traditions," but while the narrator shares in this little joke, his appreciation of the humor of the situation goes beyond what the Spaniard knows. The final irony of the story involves another consideration of cost, or of the charge for the dream experience to the dreamer, and concerns the central scene in the dream.

The significance of this gruesome scene lies in the implicit relationship that exists between the artist and the severed head. Though Scott never provides background details, the artist is evidently the one responsible for the death and mutilation of a youth whose profile was one of "ethereal beauty," because as the prisoner draws there appears on his left hand a deep, red stain. No explanation regarding the importance of the stain is given, but none is really needed: the artist is in some way guilty of a crime and his act of drawing is a means of atonement. While the artist works, the narrator notes a change in the scene:

> The expression of the faces changed--severity passed. The artist grew less and less agitated, and his expression became tranquil, the stain on his hand faded and disappeared. When he had finished, there was a moment of intense and critical examination of the work, although the group behind him was moveless. (CA, p. 227)

Apparently satisfied, the procession reforms and disappears, "as if returning from an expiatory rite," and the dream ends.

Assuming that the dream observer's claim of objective distance is an instance of dramatic irony, one must conclude that the observer in some way identifies with the artist's situation and with the need for a similar act of atonement. However, the dream observer is never developed as a character; his only function is to provide mediation between the representative artist figure and the waking traveller figure and it is through this relationship that the connection between the seemingly unrelated daytime and sleeping sequences of the story becomes clear. The artist, by rendering the image through his art, acknowledges and amends an earlier act of denial; that is, he admits that he has refused some aspect of the world he sees and, by rendering it, finally forces himself to an act of perception. This scenario has as its immediate analogy the waking action of the story, in which the narrator comes into contact with, but refuses to see or perceive, the unfamiliar world around him. His act of atonement occurs as he is forced to witness the dream which metaphorically recreates the proof of mutilated vision, and therefore he cannot deny that in all ways the "charge" for the room and the atoning experience has not been too high. He departs, as did his dream counterpart the artist, in a mood of general satisfaction.

The pattern informing different levels of experience in "A Night in Cordoba" may be summed up as a movement from the denial of full perception, which reveals a desire to maintain the preconceptions of self, to an awareness following atonement, which involves an acceptance of outer realities. Scott attempts, in the thematic structures of this story, and in the thematic preamble to the collection in which the story appears, to resolve the conflict between Self and Other in favor of an ideal of order or law. However, he can do no more than reconcile these opposites in a state of continuing tension: the ideal circle of affection is meant to be seen as greater than individual affections, yet human sexuality very nearly overpowers "The Circle of Affection"; the Canadian traveller in Spain supposedly accepts his lesson in perception, yet his final enigmatic words are as studiously aloof and detached as the attitude professed by the dream observer. Given this uneasy balance between personal ideals and external realities, it is no wonder that on an aesthetic level Scott had reason to voice doubt as to whether the notion of a governing ideal in *The Circle of Affection* was not a "possession" or self-delusion. But the theme of aesthetic principles is only one part of a collection that is far-ranging in subject matter, forms and achievement. A far more representative book, from the point of view of aesthetic concerns, is the collection *The Green Cloister*.

Published in 1935 when Scott was 73 years old, *The Green Cloister* shows evidence of being a summary statement about the career and works of an artist. Most of the poems deal in some way with death and a significant number concern an artist-figure, his place in the world and the implications of his art. The first half of the book consists of poems which depict an artist's ideal, a desire to see expressions of the Self transcending individual death to find an immortality in dreams and transformed realities.[22] The second half of the book, however, reveals ways in which the ideal is seriously compromised or undercut. At the physical center of the collection are two narrative works which mark a perceptual moment of transition, when an individual sees inner and outer worlds in a crisis of contradiction. Beginning with the first poem "Reality" (1927) and working linearly through the book to the final poem "The Nightwatchman" (1934), The Green Cloister reads as a study in the desire for a triumph of personal imagination, but Scott shows that this desire must be qualified.[23]

The first large group of poems establishes the landscape of an imaginative "green cloister," a circle wherein the artist's desire for a form of immortality is revealed. In the poem, "Chiostro Verde," Scott depicts a cloister which is in decline, but he maintains that a promise of renewal is present even in the imminent death of individual forms. An implied creator applies a vision which transcends the temporal and physical world of the cloister, and in the initial poems of The Green Cloister Scott attempts to present an artistic creator who similarly transcends the limitations of his existence.

The title of the first poem, "Reality," is ironic in the way that the titles of poems such as "The Onondaga Madonna" and "The Forsaken" are ironic. Reality is not the mundane tangible world which too often ignores the presence of poets and poetry, but a clear and assertive invention of the poet's dreaming persona. Scott pictures an Inn,

> by the flowing road,
> Where the shadow merges with the sun,
> There is lodging for everyone,
> And plenty of food in store,--
> Bread with a flavour of mould,
> Wine that is cloudy and rough. (GC, p. 9)

While the image of death, presented here as occurring on a horizon where sun and shadow appear to merge, is initially general enough to apply to anyone, Scott narrows the focus of the poem to a "you" who is both autobiographical and artistic.

The speaker of the poem is one of a noisy crowd at the Inn where all the guests are depicted as merchants trying to sell their dreams:

> "Dreams,--fine dreams!" they cry,
> But you have your dreams to offer,
> So why should you buy
> Inferior dreams. Your own
> Are lovely beyond compare;
> You unfold their tremulous tissues
> And free them to float in the air,
> But nobody seems to care. (GC, p. 9)

The speaker's dreams are offered up for sale with the rest, but no one buys and he must be content with the reality of his lot, which is signified by the drinking of harsh wine and the eating of stale bread. However, as the poem ends the speaker's belief in the superiority of his dreams above others is vindicated: he is pictured in a state of Timeless bliss, eating sweet bread and drinking fine wine.

Had the poem "Reality" followed the pattern of poems such as "The Cup," the belief that "nobody seems to care" might have been met with resignation and brave acceptance, but the poet here is determined to satisfy a desire for personal assertion. The rejection of apparent reality in favor of the desired reality is accomplished by projecting the self-aware consciousness of the poet through the veil of death, intact, so that the poet emerges triumphant as a happy soul. In this conceptualization of the soul's journey after death, Scott is following Platonic tradition. Socrates, discussing his imminent death with Simmias and Cebes, affirms the separation of body and soul and the immortality of the latter:

> . . . are we to suppose that the soul . . . is blown away and perishes immediately on quitting the body as the many say? That can never be, dear Simmias and Cebes. The truth rather is that the soul which is pure at departing draws after her no bodily taint, having never voluntarily had connection with the body, which she is ever avoiding, herself gathered into herself. . . .[24]

According to Plato, the soul escapes the limitations of the body at death, but Scott broadens the notion of "body" to include the realities and inherent imperfections of the outer world. Therefore, the soul in the poem "Reality" escapes not only its limiting corporeal self, but also the imperfect world which only offers disappointment to a consciousness that seeks and, evidently, deserves more.

Though the soul, according to Plato, is invisible, Scott clearly believes that the essence of the soul is figured forth by the cherished dreams that are the subject of the poem. It is the dream which somehow maintains its essence through death to become co-identical with the soul. When "the blood/ Slows in the aching heart," and there is a "mystical light in the air," one becomes aware that

    the unsold dreams, transfigured,
Have peopled the void
With a flutter of angels;
Over each wondering merchant
Glimmers an angel guest;
You have your angel of angels,

Whose radiance surpasses the rest;
Your hands are your angel's hands,
His soul is your soul, and you know
That the only things that were real
In all that moving show
Were the dreams. (GC, pp. 10-11)

Rather than seeing death as a total release of identity or as a flooding of the Self by elements that demand a relinquishment of personal desires, the narrator in this poem sees the event as nothing less than a fulfillment of subjective vision. Dreams, in metaphorical assertion, are not like angels, they are angels, and the angels are souls. Heaven is where the immortal dreaming Self lingers, eating the "honeyed bread" and drinking the "rich wine."

In "Reality," Scott establishes the two forms of dream that appear throughout the works of The Green Cloister. There are the dreams that are generally synonymous with ideals, aspirations and desires and have an implicit association with the poet's work. These are the dreams that no one will buy, yet they transcend death to become the essence of soul. There is also the dream which is process, the powerful motive force of the imagination which makes possible the transformation of ideals, aspirations and desires. In "Reality," this form of dream is the poem itself, the self-conscious and disciplined vision of the poet who sets out to inform reality with his personal stamp of desire. "I have a Dream," the poet is saying, "and I am able to dream It into a reality."

Faced with the ever-approaching certainty of his own death, Scott knows he soon must relinquish that part of himself that delights in a sensuous world of light, sound and movement. Many poems in the first half of this collection show that he attempts to make the loss of self less painful by pre-figuring the moment and conditions of death through his art. A short poem such as "On Ragleth Hill" (1934) may be quoted in full to illustrate how quickly and completely the move from the immediate concrete world to the inner imaginative world is made:

> A broken line of trees on the hill-crest
> Stands clear against the luminous sky. It seems
> A caravan of traders come to rest,
> Their camels weary, laden down with dreams;
> For when the first stars in the twilight shine
> The leaders of the march begin to sway,
> Then all the others tremble into line
> And tread the sands of sleep and fade away.
> Where is the market for the fragile stuff
> Enfolded in the gossamer bales they bear;
> Where are the ghostly merchants frail enough
> To come and barter in the phantom fair?
> For in their tents with sighs the dreams are bought,
> And beauty is sold for shadows of lovely thought. (_GC_, p. 25)

The landscape is briefly introduced, then replaced by a suggestive, imaginative value. The dream merchants who were in "Reality" appear again and it seems clear that Scott is offering another view of the powerful restructuring capability of the imagination. The merchants in the poem "Reality" discovered that their souls were co-identical with their dreams, but the merchants in "Ragleth Hill" have not yet made that discovery; their being is as yet unformed and introduced by a series of questions: Where is the market for the dreams, the poet asks, and where are the ghostly merchants who will barter in the dream material? The answer is that neither the dreams nor the merchants have yet become actual, because only death can give them their form or reality. The vision in "Ragleth Hill" is a projection, grounded in the poet's present world, into what he perceives will be the apotheosis of his desires through death.

The switching back and forth in _The Green Cloister_ between the portrayal of dreams as objects (ideals or concepts) and dreams as process (imaginative acts) is confusing unless the reader recognizes that both forms involve some kind of movement. In "Como" (1932), for instance, the poet's contemplation of a landscape is interrupted by a barge crossing his line of vision. In a scene that appears "far off and strange," the vessel

> Drifted like a shrivelled ghost
>   From the ancient world;
>
> With freight intangible as sleep,--
>   The passion of old wars,
> Early dreams on Love and Death,
>   The Ocean and the Stars. (GC, p. 19)

Dreams from civilizations past transcend time to appear before the poet, who notes only their transcendence or movement. Similarly, dreams as process in "At Lodore" (1934) are introduced by the movement of water and by the fading sounds of falling water. An aural illusion permits the landscape to become a point of imaginative departure, as

> Then the almost silence seeming
> Moves the spirit into dreaming
> If the water were not there,
> If the gorge of rock uprisen
> Were alone a shadowy prison
> For the air. . . . (GC, pp. 26-27)

Though the tangible presence of the scene might disappear, the reality of envisioned beauty would persist. The poet's dreaming state would transcend limitations of time and place to a landscape of the imagination:

> Yet would moonlight fall in clusters
> Crystal forms of water-lustres
> Moving on the stones,
> And the sycamore would shiver
> Murmur-ripples like the river
> Undertones. (GC, p. 27)

The transcendence of place and time is a central concern in the first half of The Green Cloister, and in two poems the dreaming state is a movement associated with birds. In "A Blackbird Rhapsody" and "The Dreaming Eagle" birds are exemplary figures who point the imaginative way beyond the bounds of ordinary experience.

When the poet first hears birdsong in "A Blackbird Rhapsody" (1932) the scene is the immediate landscape and the bird is thought to be commenting on "the joy of living." But as the poem develops, the blackbird and his song are pictured as having crossed the boundaries of time and place:

> Did Wagner build the wild Valkyrie
> War-cry on that valiant phrase?
> Did Bach tangle in the maze
> Of a fugue those six notes, bold
> As six bells of beaten gold? (GC, p. 15)

To this one sense of immortal essence, Scott adds another which suggests an analogy to the human imagination, as he muses upon the song in growing darkness:

> Yet, for just an instant
> As the light begins to minish
> Do you take to dreaming,
> With your parted golden bill,
> Half-spread wings, rapt and still. . . . (GC, p. 16)

The image of the bird, in a form of half-flight as it enters into a dream-state, is given specific imaginative reference in the lines that follow:

> After all this whirl of winging
> Is your vision a vale of rest;
> Is your dream a dream of silence
> Of a day too rich for singing
> By a brooding shadow-nest,
> Far beyond the mountains of the west? (GC, p. 16)

The perfect song transforms into a "dream of silence" or death; likewise, the poet suggests that his vision too yearns for the rest promised by death. The final lines of the poem turn to a view of creation at day's end, when all spirits that are immortal seek the rest of the "imagined West."

Although Scott sees the dream as an enabling device which allows its possessor to travel beyond immediate experience, the dreamer is not shown as losing identity, control or power. This condition is most evident in the poem "The Dreaming Eagle" (1932?). The eagle is shown "Secure upon his secret crag," that is, firmly rooted in the present world, while in his dream he is

> Driven by a dream-tempest;
> Beaten far off from his eyrie and his hour of rest
> By the great buffet of the squall
> That hurls the hard sleet on the granite. . . . (GC, p. 48)

The dream is a presage of loss and destruction, of the assault that is called death, and yet, when the eagle momentarily awakens from the dream he does not shun the vision:

> He sees the mountain, buttressed with glaciers,
> Guardian of the pass; and, clear beyond,
> A few most valiant stars flashing against the moon.
> In scorn of peaceful things he shuts his brain
> Off from the gleaming distance
> And seeks once more the wildness of his dream. (GC, p. 39)

The reason given for the eagle's choosing to return to the dream is revealing for the poems of the first part of The Green Cloister:

> He cares not whether mountains move or stars be still
> Content if he can fight the force that sweeps the air
> To fan his wing-gold to a fiercer flame,
> If he can turn his talons closer to the rock
> And feel upon the shoulder of his wings
> The Power. (GC, p. 39)

It is the dream of turbulent violence which enables the eagle to discover his potency; the dream of death does not destroy identity, rather it allows the dreamer to articulate the Self as resisting and transcending the storm. In like fashion, the poet in poems such as "Reality" creates a vision of death, but it is a death which gives the dreamer the power to maintain the identity of Self.

If the first twenty-one poems of The Green Cloister greet death optimistically, with visions of renewed identity, then the two central narrative poems represent a shift in attitude, so that the optimistic visions are qualified by incidents depicting dreams defeated by death. "A Scene at Lake Manitou" (1933) and "At Gull Lake: August 1810" (1934), which have been discussed earlier at length, do have messages of acceptance and comfort that are based in a universal order, but the sense of a personal and individual loss is also present. Within the bounds of these narratives, death is final and absolute. The arrangement of poems is curious in this respect: it appears as if Scott, having presented the optimistic view of the power of the restructuring imagination in the first poems, felt compelled to qualify or undercut that view with a reassertion of death's reality in these two middle poems. Another twenty-one poems follow the two narratives and in many respects this last grouping presents a study in contrast to the mood and images of the first group of twenty-one.

The second half of the book is different from the first half in a number of obvious ways: birds as key images are almost entirely absent; poems of specific landscapes or places are replaced by more generalized settings in titles such as "Under Stars" (1927) or "By the Seashore." Dreams, when mentioned at all, are not dynamic vehicles for the soul but elusive and, sometimes, as is the case in "The Spider and the Rose" (1928), dark visions of guilt and despair. In one such poem, "The Bells" (1929), the poet desires sleep and that state when

> The flawless night is fluent and bemused
> With fusion of flower and tone and overtone.
> Time is entranced,
> Entranced thyself and led by enchanted Sleep
> Into the Country where the Real is Dream. (GC, p. 70)

Described in these lines is the landscape of the poem "Reality," but the speaker in "The Bells" is expressing his desire, not the reality of his situation. The night he experiences is one

> of sullen rain
> And a tormented wind
> That torture one another;
> If the wind screams the rain is still as death,
> If the rain sobs the wild wind holds its breath;
> But both conspire against the rule of silence
> And the sanctuary of Sleep. (GC, p. 70)

In place of the dream experience that yields purpose, direction and fulfillment in "Reality," the elusive dream in "The Bells" leaves only a sense of isolation, confusion and loss:

> The frantic night is full of violence and of lamentation;
> Time is distraught, silence is blinded--
> Blinded thyself and led by the blind ghost
> Of sleep seeking the Country he has lost. (GC, p. 71)

The inevitable coupling of desire and loss seems adequately summarized by the poem's subtitle, "Sleep and Sleeplessness," and is reflected by the implicit pairing of poems that contain contrasting attitudes. "Imogen's Wish" (1926), for instance, expresses a desire to be remembered after death, while immediately following it, and in apparent contradiction to it, is the poem "Time, the Victor" (1929), which depicts a graveyard where tombstones are crumbling:

And Time the careless Victor,
   In spite of hopes and tears
Will crush the stones of memory
   With the falling years. (GC, p. 74)

Only the very young seem able to ignore death, as do the two young lovers in "Spring in the Valley," but their peace is decidedly conditional:

   Two lovers are at rest;
No thoughts disturb the pools of joy
   Tranquil in either breast. (GC, p. 75)

For those who have lived longer, and who have reflected upon life, a feeling of sorrow seems inevitable and is expressed in a number of poems such as "Enigma" (1930) and "By the Seashore." The second half of The Green Cloister describes a world that impinges upon the Self, that seems bent upon the obliteration of identity and feelings of comfort and peace.

In one sense, the purpose of the second major group of poems in The Green Cloister is to illustrate the growth to awareness of the Self's actual humble position in the universe. Scott forces the creative Self to realize what the lover in "At Sunset" discovers:

Let us tell over now in rich reflection
Our finite love treasured in Time's despite,
Infinite Love instinct with all perfection
Is settling close around us with the night.
Our two, wild hearts have suffered grievous things,
Let us be comforted beneath His wings. (GC, p. 59)

The message here is the same as the theme of the story "The Circle of Affection": all human love and individual ideals should be subordinated to universal ideals. Similarly, in "The Wise Men from the East," the Self is taught that all desires inspired by worldly goals (such as wealth and recognition) must conform to the message that "Love is the precious thing" (GC, p. 84). The theme common to these poems is enlightenment, an education that reveals the dangers of the desires of the Self, as these are depicted in "Reality." In most of these poems the mood is one of acceptance, resignation, and even sorrow during the discovery of the finality of isolation and death of the Self (as is the case in "At the Seashore"), but in one poem, "The Spider and the Rose," the discovery is presented in terms of bitter self-condemnation.

I have already discussed the ambivalences towards sexuality revealed by Scott in "The Water-Lily" and how these ambivalences affect his ability to decide just how much he is going to reveal in "The Circle of Affection." In "The Spider and the Rose" Scott turns the full force of these conflicting feelings upon the question of artistic responsibility, with results that seriously qualify the image of an assertive and creative Self.

The theme in "The Spider and the Rose" is revelation, an artist's discovery of the implications of his relationship to his art. The process by which the discovery is made, however, is neither direct nor clear, as the reader learns in the opening lines of the poem:

> Films and flashes--
> Music came in careless crashes
> On the shore of silence. . . . (GC, p. 85)

Obscuring films and illuminating flashes characterize the dream landscape that Scott introduces: sense impressions are alternately unclear and vivid; the significance of character action shifts and grows with meaning. The poem achieves a continuity of meaning by developing the narrative as an allegory, so that the action which is representative of life's experience is depicted as a Fair located in a sea, and the principal characters are Beauty, who is the object of the poet's search, the Shadow, who is death, and the narrator, who serves as a representative artist figure.

The sea, consistent with descriptions of the image as a place of sorrow and pain in poems such as "By the Seashore," is in this poem the scene of the narrator's disillusionment and sense of loss. He searches for Beauty in a crowd of dancers at the sea Fair of "Moods and Passions,/ Of Follies and of Fashions," but instead of the object of his desire, he finds a false figure of Beauty who nevertheless exercises a powerful attraction upon him:

> She was gypsy-dark and free,
> Naked to the waist and wild,
> A changeling, a fairy child;
> Spiders lived in her dusk hair,
> I could see them ambushed there.
> As we danced she bent away--
> Far away, and backward bent;
> Down and down we went,
> Outcasts from a honied moon,
> At the nadir of the swoon
> Her remote and fairy features
> Gleamed like some illfated creature's
> Floating in a pool. (GC, p. 86)

The dark and wild girl is attractive, yet disturbing. Scott continues to emphasize this mixture of attraction and repulsion as the girl undergoes transformations to become, first, the figure of a rose-tree and, second, a dream princess. In each of these forms, she promises fulfillment and happiness but in truth gives bitter disappointment.

Even during the moment of their sexual climax, the narrator sees the dark girl as growing remote, drifting away from him. The sense of unfulfilled desire is complicated by a vague warning, as the girl sings

Leave the roses on the rose-tree
Day after day
Leave them, let them linger
Till they fade away
Let them know the joy of dying
Ungathered after all
With fragrance sighing
As they fall. (GC, p. 86)

Because the girl's hair later becomes a rose-tree filled with blossoms, the process by which the narrator is made to discover guilt is complicated and interesting. Only after the girl has seduced the narrator does she offer her cryptic warning, and only after the warning and implicit condemnation is voiced, does the narrator actually become aware of what he has done. Scott manages to show that the act is committed by an unconscious and relatively innocent figure, while maintaining that the consequences of the act result in a consuming sense of guilt. The haunting nature of that guilt is revealed in the sequence of lines involving the dream princess.

As the narrator vainly searches for the true "darling Beauty/ I had come there to see," he sees a pigeon which, while hanging in air, transforms into

Not a pigeon but a hand carven fair
Out of ivory--
Perfect, so I dreamed, a hand
A mad princess might command
Her Chief Carver to make
For a false lover's sake.
(She had strangled him and cut off a hand).
The hand hung at her side,
She played with it and cried,--
"This is good luck" . . . . (GC, p. 90)

The narrator views the dream scene with supposed detachment; the symbolic castration figured by the severed hand does not impress him in a personal way at first. Then, just as his guilt was revealed to him by the wild girl after the sexual climax, the narrator recognizes the hand:

> But I shivered when I saw
> That between the thumb and finger
> Was a living white rose. (GC, p. 90)

The narrator realizes that the hand is his own, and at the moment of this realization, the Fair, which had been so full of noise and movement, falls quiet. The Shadow summons the narrator to his death.

The image of the guilty hand, severed in "The Spider and the Rose" and smeared with its victim's blood in "A Night in Cordoba," reveals an artistic ambivalence in Scott. His artist figures, in attempting to grasp beauty, are guilty of destroying it. The dilemma which Scott creates for himself is demonstrated by the conflicting thematic statements found in the collection, The Green Cloister. In the work "Reality" Scott is saying that the artist's perceptions create the highest order of meaning in the world, but in "The Spider and the Rose" he shows that artistic vision ultimately fails.

The works in The Green Cloister are arranged to show the poet's sad enlightenment: the narrator's voice in the first poems expresses hopeful anticipation of fulfillment, of a consummation of desires for an immortal vision of the self; in the poems of the last half of the book, the narrator expresses an increasing awareness of failure and loss of sustaining vision.

As the collected work which represents Scott's culminating thoughts on art and life, The Green Cloister appropriately ends with "The Nightwatchman." Scott, in a tone that is self-ironic, identifies with the speaker in the poem and with the central character, a nightwatchman named Alfred Mee. Recalling childhood pleasures of moments spent with

Mee and his wife, the narrator relates his discovery of an epitaph the old man had penned for himself and evidently forgotten in the bottom of a desk drawer. The epitaph ends with a plea for remembrance from those who might venture upon Mee's burial place:

> then do agree
> To say a prayer for him where'er you be
> For when you pray for him you pray for ME. (GC, p. 96)

Alfred Mee attempts to use memory as a way of linking his immortal and mortal selves, for the "him" is his soul while the "Me" is the speaking, living Self. But the pronoun reference in these lines is sufficiently vague to include the poet narrator as well as the writer of the epitaph and, characteristically, the hope for immortality through memory is undercut. The concluding lines of the poem are spoken by the poet:

> Who wrote the lines and are they on the stone
> Where Mister and Mistress Mee lie all alone?
> Someday I must adventure to the spot
> And search amid the maples for their plot;
> When I approach the headstone I should hope
> To know it by the scent of heliotrope,
> And rooted firm within their tiny span,
> To find the pungent herb that's called OLD MAN. (GC, p. 96)

By asking who wrote the lines, the speaker calls into question the strength and clarity of the very memory which Mee had hoped for and which the speaker himself had previously affirmed through recollection. Furthermore, the sentimentality created by the accidental discovery of the lost epitaph is neutralized by the vagueness of the resolution, "Someday I must . . . ."

Alfred Mee is Scott's representative figure, the Everyman who desires some sense of a Self which transcends mortal experience and death but, more specifically, Mee stands for Scott the aged bureaucrat and poet.

Mee, who worked as a caretaker by night and wrote poems by day, is not so unlike Scott, who worked as a bureaucratic caretaker of society while writing poetry that few people read. Scott wishes, then, that the poem be read as his own epitaph, a fact which becomes too obvious with his use of entirely capitalized words. In what is for him an unusual reliance on this device, Scott creates a coded emphasis for the reader. The words, as they appear in separate sections of the poem, are:

OLD MAN
EPITAPH
MR. ALFRED MEE
HARK
ME
OLD MAN

All the words appear near or at the very ends of lines. As a group, the words act as a sign, in the way that a tombstone stands as a sign or message in a cemetery; they are a plea against forgetfulness and against the obliterating forces of time and nature.

Having begun his collection with the assertive and self-centered vision of "Reality," Scott ends The Green Cloister with a message of artistic failure in "The Spider and the Rose" and with a humble awareness of personal mutability in "The Nightwatchman." Sadly, Scott admits that the opposing pulls of Self and Other must eventually be won by those forces beyond the control of personal consciousness and desire: sooner or later in the life of each person, the wood must go down to the sea and be lost.

The vision of acceptance informing the organization and content of The Green Cloister must be a sad one, because it involves rational restraints upon the powerful desires of the Self which, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, is "imperial" in its attitude towards the external world. Quentin Anderson uses this same adjective in the title of his study on American literature in a social context, The Imperial Self. Writers such as Emerson, Whitman and Henry James, he says, avoid restrictions of the Self because they have

> a profound extrasocial commitment: their imaginative work ignores, elides or transforms history, politics, heterosexuality, the hope for purposive change.[25]

Both in his choice of literary subjects and in his formulation of an intellectual outlook, Scott provides a career and body of written work which provides a contradiction to the attitude Anderson describes. Scott emphasizes tensions arising from differences that are sexual, cultural and historical. The works discussed in this chapter show that a constant state of conflict exists between the demands made by the internal, thinking subject and those posed by the perceived external world, and share as their basic premise a belief that the subjective intelligence should strive to accept the realities of the external world. In "Charcoal" and "Pierre" for example, Scott shows individuals caught between desires to rejoin a community and to preserve the Self in relative isolation, to answer challenges posed by the present and to grow away from restraints of the past.

Irresolution as a continuing state between opposing desires, such as the one governing the schematically paired poems "The Wood by the Sea" and "The Sea by the Wood," appears in Scott's work, but his conviction is that the Self ever works to conquer this irresolution for its own ends. Thus, the Piper attempts to seduce the landscape imaginatively, to see death as something which may be conquered by art, but his voyage, Scott insists, must end ironically, with a recognition that one cannot possess the whole world, or, as Quentin Anderson puts it, that one cannot "eradicate [the world's] most stubborn pluralism."[26]

Not surprisingly then, there are significant similarities between the symbolic poem "The Piper of Arll," which depicts a universalized artist figure, and the later symbolic poem "The Spider and the Rose," which reflects a more personal disappointment and acceptance through a first person narrator. Both poems involve an artist who launches a personal creative vision upon a seascape, only to find an unexpected form of death. Both artists are beckoned by mysterious and attractive objects (the sailors in the former poem, and Beauty in the latter), but ironically cause the deaths of those same objects. Even the manner of dying is the same: the Piper sinks slowly to the ocean floor; the narrator in "The Spider and the Rose" sinks under a "rain of ashes" under a "falling sea." And, just as the Piper yearns in death for his lost Self with "upward gazing" eyes, likewise the artist in the later poem looks sadly after the figure of Beauty who kisses him briefly before fleeing forever.

There is a consistency of thinking and concern in Scott's writing which evidences itself in many individual works, but this unity is most thoroughly expressed in the themes and arrangements of poems in The Green Cloister. Appropriately, Scott chose the temptations of artistic desire as the subject of this collection, since he recognized that it was this desire that was one of the most central to the aims of his own imperial Self.

CONCLUSION

SCOTT'S CRITICS AND THE REVISION OF HISTORY

In the Introduction to this study, I said that the history of Scott criticism was a record of vaguely defined interpretation which, most recently, has resulted in a willful misreading of texts. The reason for this present state of misinterpretation, I believe, lies in the basic difference which exists between the ways Scott and his critics have viewed the creation, the reading and the effect of literature. For Scott, as he shows in the essay "Poetry and Progress," these aspects were related but distinct; for his critics, these aspects have become interrelated and even identical.

Attempting to define the nature of poetry in "Poetry and Progress," Scott begins with an observation which concerns the reader's perception of the literary work:

> Perhaps the best, the only definition of poetry is a true poem, for poetry and the poetic is a quality or state of mind and cannot be described, it is apprehended by sensation, not comprehended by reason. (DCS, p. 14)

It is significant that reason, according to Scott, does not aid the reader, who knows "instinctively" what a true poem is; emotional capacity is central to Scott's view of reader response, and reader response is seen as being distinct from the processes which actually create the poem.

But, Scott knows that critics wish to illuminate that central "quality" which he names and, in order to guide these readers to the "finest criticism," he describes some ideals poets have used to inform the processes of their creative acts:

> The beauty is flashed upon the eye and withdrawn. It is remembered in darkness and is verified by the merest flutter or flash of illumination, but the secret of the beauty is shrouded in mystery. I refer to such sayings as this of Coleridge: "It is the blending of passion with order that constitutes perfection" in poetry; that of Keats, "The excellence of every art is its intensity"; that of Rossetti, "Moderation is the highest law of poetry." (DCS, p. 15)

These ideals, especially the one Scott takes from Coleridge, deserve more detailed discussion, but for the moment I want to emphasize Scott's stated aim in this part of his discourse. He observes that these apothegms written by the poets

> accomplish perfectly the necessary separation between the art and the spirit of the art, between the means and the effect. They are flashed upon the mystery and isolate it so that it may be apprehended by its aloofness and separation from things and appearances. (DCS, p. 15)

Though related, the "instinctively" grasped appreciation of art and the actual creation of that art are characterized by a necessary separation, Scott says, in this passage which warns against equating artistic "means" and artistic "effect." His belief in this separateness of the different aspects of literary creation and appreciation, a belief that his critics increasingly have not shared, is repeated in his view of the social purposes of art.

Near the end of "Poetry and Progress," Scott describes the role which the artist ideally plays in the history of human events:

> The imagination has always been concerned with endeavours to harmonize life and to set up nobler conditions of living; to picture perfect social states and to commend them to the reason. The poet is the voice of the imagination, and the art in which he works, apart from the conveyed message, is an aid to the

> cause for it is ever striving for perfection, so that the most fragile lyric is a factor in human progress as well as the most profound drama. (DCS, p. 26)

Two related but still distinct models are described: the "true" poem, which edifies the reader as he instinctively recognizes it, and the poet's ideal informing vision of "perfect social states" which, as the "conveyed message," is determined or shaped by rational discourse or examination. An interesting shared characteristic emerges, then, between this passage and the previous one concerning means and effect in poetry. In his descriptions of the effect of poetry and of the poetry which edifies through striving for perfection, Scott emphasizes the powers of emotion and instinct as means available to the reader. Conversely, in both passages as he describes the poet's construction of poetry and the philosophic and social vision governing the art, he stresses the self-conscious manipulation of techniques and the central belief in reason that are available to the poet. The poet as a practitioner of rational choice, therefore, is an ideal Scott admired and evidently sought to apply in his own work.

Reason, as the self-conscious and ordering power of creative thought, assumes a position of greatest importance in Scott's view of the artist. His quotation of Coleridge, who leads a list of authoritative literary figures in the passage from "Poetry and Progress," reveals an outlook best understood in light of a significant section from the Biographia Literaria:

> The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the imagination.

> This power, first put into action by the will and understanding . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities. . . .[1]

Though Coleridge names a number of qualities which are blended or reconciled in this manner, including "a more than usual state of emotion, with a more than usual order," he is clearly describing a conscious, logical process which is initiated by human will and understanding. Scott, by alluding to Coleridge's theory of the imagination, asserts that opposing values or forces may contribute to the creation of a work, but are always subject to the highest rational will of the ideal artist, and do not flow from him, unchecked, as a revelation of his personal character or psychology. Critics, however, have increasingly refused to accept this very important intentional difference between the conscious manipulation of, and the unconscious revelation of, oppositions in Scott's work. One of the earliest of these critics is E. K. Brown.

While discussing "At the Cedars," Brown uses the terms restraint and intensity and makes two observations he thinks are essentially the same but which, in fact, are startlingly different. The first is an attempt at a definition, "What I mean by an attempt at restrained intensity of manner will be evident from so brief a passage as this, especially from its laconic close," which is followed by a quotation of the poem's concluding lines. The definition then leads to a very interesting speculation:

> It is significant that in such a subject, new to Scott and treated in such a bold and simple fashion, the same fundamental quality is evident. It is significant because _it appears to point to something permanent and instinctive in his practice, permanent and instinctive in himself_. (_DCS_, pp. 79-80; italics mine)

The first observation is accurate, in that it captures the juxtaposing of an emotionally evocative narrative scene with the narrator's brief and detached recording of the event, and so reveals the poet's conscious and disciplined artistry. This insightful assessment says something far different, however, from the second speculative statement which implies that the artistry is dependent upon something instinctive or non-rational in the artist's psychology. Brown, in fact, uses the same word, "instinctively," that Scott uses in "Poetry and Progress" to illustrate the necessary separation that exists between the poet's method of creating poetry and the reader's non-rational response to the literary work. To my knowledge, Brown is the first critic to suggest that the contraries Scott believed he was consciously manipulating were actually emanating from a mysterious and uncontrolled source. By the time the Conclusion to the Literary History of Canada was published in 1965, with Northrop Frye's belief that Scott had unconsciously mirrored the uneasy and unresolved tensions characteristic of Canadian thinking, most critics had chosen to ignore the poetics of "Poetry and Progress" and the author's claim that oppositions were a means to artistic effect and not an end in themselves.[2]

The result in contemporary Scott criticism is a tendency to ignore or devalue generally those works which reflect traditional ideals and specifically those works which show a faith in rational processes. This tendency may be mildly stated, as is the case when John Matthews identifies Scott's greatest achievements as "moments of becoming" where contraries attain a timeless perfection of irresolution. While Scott sometimes does concentrate on a moment of transition held in perfection (the poem from the first half of The Green Cloister, "A Prairie Water

Colour," provides a good example of this kind of work) Matthews' choice of a representative quality reveals less about the general nature of the Scott canon than it does about the values of certain contemporary critics and artists. Michael Ondaatje, for example, has taken as his personal poetic this same outlook:

> And that is all this writing should be then.
> The beautiful formed things caught at the wrong moment
> so they are shapeless, awkward
> moving to the clear.[3]

Ondaatje's may be the poetic shared by many Canadian writers today, but it was not Scott's. Similarly Scott did not elevate, the way some contemporary critics such as Gordon Johnston do, the processes which lead to a rejection of traditional structures of thinking.

I have referred several times to the article by Gordon Johnston because he represents the most recent, cumulative form of Scott criticism. In a concluding statement which must be the most complete and accurate summation of contemporary critical opinion regarding Scott, Johnston describes both the ways in which Scott must be read, and the ways in which the Canadian perception and imagination should work. He says that Scott

> seems so close to the centre of the Canadian imagination and to a central Canadian question, that of changing your mind. Canada was founded after all as a nation, not by people who had already changed their minds (as in the American colonies), but by people who had no intention of doing so, saw no need to do so. But the place itself obliged them to make up their minds. If you import European categories (Greek logic, German idealism, English utilitarianism) and they don't fit, what do you do? You bash away until they do fit (as in missionary education and assimilation), or you learn what is here and change your categories, your thinking, to fit the land and its native peoples.[4]

These lines reiterate and tend to clarify certain points that have been made in Scott criticism: (1) that Scott is a representative Canadian literary figure; (2) that he is a writer reflecting a dynamic and positive irresolution; (3) that he exemplifies the necessity for rejecting old methods of thinking in the face of new situations. What is particularly interesting about these observations, however, is that though Johnston is evidently concerned with the "Canadian imagination" and the "Canadian question," his critical outlook is so obviously influenced by the critical theory of an American, Harold Bloom, whose observations are designed to reveal a distinctly American imaginative vision.

Footnotes and direct references to Bloom and Bloom's choice of a central American poet, Wallace Stevens, show that Johnston's opinion of Scott is shaped in large part by a distinctive set of critical and aesthetic ideals. The most important aspect of this set, for Johnston, is the assumption that the "strong" writer overthrows his inherited tradition or, as he says about Scott, desires to overcome a "willed submission to inherited structures."[5] Bloom claims that the "strong" writer is one who effects a successful imaginative rebellion against his literary predecessors, a rebellion which he sees as having a psychological parallel: the writer is a kind of literary son and therefore "the proper use of Freud, for the literary critic, is not so to apply Freud (or even revise Freud) as to arrive at an Oedipal interpretation of history."[6]

Given the premise of Bloom's Freudian theory of literary history, a critic such as Johnston must then see a poet such as Scott as one who, if he is a strong representative national writer, struggles to assert a self against an oppressive paternalistic tradition. In fact, another of Bloom's assumptions dictates that a critic such as Johnston shall not be restrained by claims, made either by the writer himself or by other critics, that any objective statements can be made about the reality of a text:

> Influence, as I conceive it, means that there are no texts, but only relationships between texts. These relationships depend upon a critical act, a misreading or misprision, that one poet performs upon another, and that does not differ in kind from the necessary critical acts performed by every strong reader upon every text he encounters. The influence-relation governs reading as it governs writing, and reading is therefore a miswriting just as writing is a misreading.[7]

Criticism of this kind certainly serves the critic and his audience best, if the sense of "to serve" is taken to mean a reassuring presentation of ideals and interpretations that conform to contemporary standards and expectations, but even Bloom seems to realize that his approach raises an old and persistent problem: "the relationship between philosophy's struggles with the idea of solipsism, and literature's rather more desperate struggles with the same notion."[8] Bloom is willing to risk the subjectivist pitfalls inherent in his theory because he believes the overthrow of traditional structures of thought, by either poet or reader, allows the subject a more direct apprehension of the object. Similarly, under Bloom's influence, Johnston states that a rejection of "European categories" freed Scott for a "commitment to that larger world, to the evidenced range of life and consciousness."[9] While Johnston makes the accurate, if unoriginal, observation that Scott's poetry is better when it does not depend on archaicisms of diction, he does not correctly identify the writer's method of articulating a commitment to a "larger world." I believe it is this difference, between Johnston's reading of Scott and Scott's own stated methods and aims as a writer, which has serious implications for the evaluation of the writer's importance in literature and society.

Scott had difficulty sorting out contradictory views of the problem of the relationship between the subject and the object, especially with regard to the dangers posed by solipsistic delusion. While condemning those figures, such as Pierre and Powassan, who have denied the truth of a larger world and larger processes in favor of the emotional and intellectual possessions of familiar ways, he consistently chose for himself those ways of seeing dependent upon a rational, idealistic vision. Contrary to what Johnston says, the method used to attain the apprehension of the object is the one most faithful to Scott's tradition, though the goal is an acceptance of that which lies outside the bounds of the subjective self. For example, Scott clearly aligns himself with a European philosophic and literary tradition when he describes the self-conscious and self-controlled ways in which poetry is written. Similarly he says that the ideals which inform the methods of writing are those associated with rationality; the poet commends his vision, he says, to "the reason." The landscape did not suggest alternative ways or methods of seeing to Scott, though he did encounter new experiences; the Indian did not suggest a viable alternative social or moral vision to him, though he was moved by individual circumstances and the sad spectacle of a culture's death. Whatever we can conclude about Scott given these facts, we have to admit that his commitment to rational processes led to a necessary choice between alternatives that is reflected in his work as a civil servant in a bureaucracy dedicated to the perfection of a European colonial culture. In this light we can see that Scott was not the pioneering figure of a new consciousness that Johnston and others have held him to be, but rather a conservative who failed, as did so many of his contemporaries, to question the self-image of his culture.

Aside from this personal, major lapse in the area of cultural objectivity, Scott was consistent in his drive to avoid the comfortable solipsistic trap. Though his ideas were obviously limited by his intellectual heritage, he tried to assimilate external realities in ways which his more reactionary contemporaries could not; his was the skeptic's distrust of the familiar, the romantic's belief in the necessity of change:

> The desire of creative minds everywhere is to express the age in terms of the age, and by intuition to flash light into the future. Revolt is essential to progress, not necessarily the revolt of violence, but always the revolt that questions the established past and puts it to the proof, that finds the old forms outworn and invents new forms for new matters. (DCS, p. 23)

Though clearly influenced by his Christian background, for example, he nevertheless saw that the forms of that faith were subject to change and that those Christians who resisted change in this way were not unlike the Indians who resisted the inevitable transformations of their way of life. Some members of the old ways would attempt to preserve the old forms, because this preservation ensured a sense of identity, but eventually they would have to come to terms with the one undeniable fact common to all experience and living things: death.

In A Map of Misreading, Harold Bloom says that it is the "inherent belief of all strong poets, that the animate always has priority, and that death is only a failure in imagination."[10] The desire of the Self, Scott knew, was to pull all experience to its own subjective pole of influence, to redefine all the world, even death, within the bounds of the aspirations and needs of personal vision. However, he could not escape the fact of death, either personally or historically, and could not say as Bloom does elsewhere in his book, "a poem is written to escape dying. Literally, poems are refusals of mortality."[11] To really know the world, as Scott tried to demonstrate, meant one had to accept the death of the physical self, the death of the Self's works (a painful acceptance Scott at first refuses in The Green Cloister, for example, in the poem "Reality"), and even the possible death of memory of the cherished Self (as he demonstrates in poems such as "The Nightwatchman" in the second half of The Green Cloister). His last truly unified collection, The Green Cloister, is a carefully developed scenario of this growth to acceptance. People such as Bloom's follower Johnston do not sympathize with this philosophic outlook and so choose not to see its importance in Scott's work. Neither in his discursive prose statements on art and life, nor in the ideas governing individual and collected works are there significant or numerous evidences of the qualities of thought these critics eagerly seek: a desire to escape the constraints of rationality and thus overleap a European heritage of moral and ethical vision; a harbored distrust of the official social policies of his culture; or an abdication of objectivity that would allow his imaginative Self to reshape the distinct nature of the Other to suit the needs of subjectivist vision.

Because critics, from E. K. Brown to Frye to Johnston, have based so much of their perception of Scott as a kind of forefather of Canadian literary history on erroneous assumptions, the claims of my literary study have certain serious implications for their assessment of him as a cultural figure. If I am correct in describing Scott as a representative Victorian who held strong intellectual ideals based on a rational, Christian and evolutionist vision, then he becomes inappropriate as a pioneering example of moral relativism, of enlightened liberal Indian policy, of the modern version of the "strong" romantic poet struggling successfully with his literary ancestors. He emerges instead as a conservative colonial whose views represent a moribund culture, a man who made no significant contribution to the growth of our own supposedly enlightened times; Johnston, we will remember, said as much when he relegated those poems which did not fit his criteria to the category of "minor."

My own view of Scott seeks neither to revise the tone and content of his works, nor to reject him as important simply because his views do not reflect the expressed critical or political ideals of our own time. I claim that there is a consistency between what Scott intended to say and what he did say, in most works, and that the resultant corpus of writing, whether we as critics and readers like the fact or not, is an accurate reflection of an earlier Canadian outlook that has profoundly affected the character of our present society and culture. His is a place of congruence, as I suggested in Chapter II, for the intellectual surroundings of his society and it is possible to identify a number of areas in which his values and goals have emerged, altered but intact, as the values and goals of late twentieth-century English Canada.

Official Indian policy today is more recognizant of inherent values in Indian history and culture than was the case during Scott's administration but, even with the supposed abandonment of assimilation as a guiding principle, the gradual disappearance of Indian ways, values and communities appears to be a continuing and irreversible phenomenon. Some groups, such as the Erminskin band of central Alberta, are prosperous, but it is a prosperity gained through successful adoption of the prevailing values of a materialistic and technological white society.[12] This trend, which is a voluntary embracing of the kind of economic tactics which Scott advocated through plans such as the Indian farm program, seems destined to end only with the total political, economic and cultural assimilation of the Indian that he hoped would someday take place. Progress, though that term would not be endorsed by many political scientists and supporters of ethnic and racial preservation of heritage, has been made in the ways Scott believed possible: through the paternalistic programs of the dominant, bureaucratically organized society. It is hard to deny that, as a willing servant of his society, Scott helped make certain goals in this area become a reality.

Scott's role as a bureaucrat becomes even more interesting when one considers the broader implications this career had for him personally as a writer and for other, subsequent artists in Canada. I refer here to the question of a writer's potential role as a critic of his society or, more strongly stated, as an adversary to the dominant urges and activities of his time. The growth of bureaucratic giantism, characterized in part by the proliferation of managerial and professional classes, is obviously not something which can be blamed on Scott alone, as my discussion of this North American phenomenon in Chapter II shows; nor would it be reasonable to argue that his personal example persuaded other artists to join public life. However, Scott again emerges as a representative precursor in Canadian history, as an artist who had little difficulty combining his art with his career in government.

The contemporary artist has perfected Scott's example, by becoming ever more involved with a vast communal structure of governments, universities and media. In 1963 R. L. McDougall identified the university as being one area where writers were gathering in too great a number, and said:

> For the great bulk of Canadian writers the environments of childhood and of "the struggle for a living" are uniform in kind; professional, relatively well-to-do, "genteel," above all, academic. Is one to expect from these closed, circumspect and intellectually sophisticated ranks a dynamic view of society? It is not surprising that our literature lies all one way, and it is not surprising that within this literature the concepts of class are dim and the response to the problem of individual freedom within the social structure negligible.[13]

I agree with McDougall when he says that intellectuals, including writers, have "an obligation to debate perpetually the credentials of the social plan," but I think his remarks need qualification on two counts: he does not clearly show that the writer's involvement with the university usually initiates an even wider association with larger structures of government; and he only vaguely suggests an answer may be found in a "turbulence" which would unsettle a static social structure. The latter idea failed to materialize in the unfocussed academic and social idealism of the 1960's, and the former insight barely opens the door on questions which demand much closer study.

Twenty years since McDougall's observation, the writer's place in Canadian society is increasingly characterized by identification with official structures. Canada Council writing grants and speaking tours, writer's residencies at universities, and federal or provincial government postings in departments of culture have strengthened the writer's association with the bureaucratic and communal body of his society. Scott, in his belief that he could best actualize his ideals through involvement with the motive forces of his society, is the forerunner of today's artist who accepts the financial assistance and other securities offered by a paternalistic structure of government, education and media. The dangers posed by this situation may not be obvious or dramatic, but are real nonetheless. As Christopher Lasch says in his criticism of American culture, the members of the government-university-corporate power structure are more interested in articulating pragmatic solutions to immediate problems than they are in changing basic concepts or systems:

> What unifies their actions is the need to promote and defend the system of corporate capitalism from which they--managers and professionals who operate the system--derive most of the benefits. The needs of the system shape policy and set the permissible limits of public debate. Most of us can see the system but not the class that administers it and monopolizes the wealth it creates. We resist a class analysis of modern society . . . . [and] prevent ourselves from understanding how our current difficulties arose, why they persist, or how they might be solved.[14]

While Lasch's remarks are primarily concerned with the decision-making groups and his analysis is better when he identifies a social malaise than when he suggests a cure, he provides a valuable insight into the pervasiveness of the power structure in North American society. The all-encompassing nature of this structure means that the dominant cultural force embraces intellectuals, scholars and artists who are too thoroughly compromised, as a group, to launch a deep and significant critique of that culture's assumptions and practices. McDougall saw "an obligation to debate perpetually the credentials of the social plan," but in the twenty years since he called attention to this need, the neutralization of the artist's critical potential appears more possible than ever before.

I believe that this particular problem in the historical analysis of literature, the question of the artist's role as adversary to dominant structures of society, is central to this study on two counts: first, with regard to Scott's own actions and writings as bureaucrat and artist in Victorian Canada, and second, with regard to the contribution, for good or bad, he made to the shaping of our present culture in this country. We can conclude, from a consideration of his activities in their immediate context, that the measure of his successes ironically determined the magnitude of his failures: as a bureaucrat who mirrored and furthered the aspirations and convictions of his society, he was very successful; as a social scientist and artist, he was compromised and even blinded by his dedication to a social and economic establishment. We can also conclude, with regard to the presence of influence upon our ideas and actions, that Scott was indirectly instrumental in strengthening the politics of compromise, and that the most obvious example of this condition occurs in the criticism being written today about Scott. This criticism misinterprets the meaning of his writing and so makes accurate historical and, specifically, social criticism exceedingly difficult.

The polemics of my approach has assumed the existence of two opposing camps in contemporary North American criticism, camps which Frank Lentricchia has described as characterized by:

> . . . on the one hand, a continuing urge to essentialize literary discourse by making it a unique kind of language--a vast, enclosed textual and semantic preserve--and, on the other hand, by an urge to make literary language "relevant" by locating it in larger contexts of discourse and history.[15]

I reject the dominant opinion regarding Scott, an opinion which has increasingly sought to prove Northrop Frye's claim that literature is an enclosed universe where

> you relate works of literature . . . to each other. Whatever value there is in studying literature, cultural or practical, comes from the total body of our reading, the castle of words we've built, and keep adding new wings to all the time.[16]

If this approach is used, then the resulting judgments are necessarily subjective and uncritical with regard to concerns such as the relationship between the artist and his society. And, though I would agree that each generation of readers contributes a new and subjective element to the reading of a text, I do not accept the unleashed relativism of one critic who said, "The work is still to be, and I make it to be."[17] This is the kind of thinking which informs Bloom's advice that every reader must be "strong" in his revision of a text, and similarly, Johnston's creation of a Scott canon inimical to the intellectual consistencies found in the writer's work. Most of the critics I have discussed expose themselves to the same danger to which Scott fell victim, a cultural solipsism. Theirs is a reading of the text which is quite faithful to a desire to see current ideals of relativism as implicitly correct and gaining the sanction of historical precedent through the corrected or revised example of Scott's literary intentions. This self-congratulatory method, then, fails to criticize the assumptions of the critical and academic establishment, and refuses to judge Scott using criteria which would demand an historical critique of modern and contemporary culture.

A pursuit of literature and criticism that turns ever more upon itself, seeking to make itself a closed system of imaginative discourse, denies the pluralism offered by the world. In his criticism of the kind of literature that elevates a vision of the Self which is imperial and isolated, Quentin Anderson says:

> the human givens which made for epic, tragedy, the transcendent God, politics, and the imaginative recognition of such commonplaces as birth, parenthood, and death are all swallowed up. There is no escaping it: if you master all you know and feel you can only play the universal role, you are your absolute.[18]

Man becomes God in the drive to exercise imaginative and literal control over the universe. The Self, rejecting desires which evidence the presence of Otherness, claims that it contains all things: Pierre, rejecting the attractions of community, family and potential lovers and friends, dedicates his life to a gratification of his innermost desires and becomes his own absolute.

While he sometimes failed in ways both personal and cultural to avoid the temptation of the all-powerful and imperial Self, Scott did struggle with the problems posed by an acceptance of outside realities. The inheritors of his world of intellectual concerns and literary discourse have ceased even to struggle with this problem, choosing the enclosures of relativism and subjectivism. I believe that criticism deserves to be more than a home for intellectual narcissists; critics should have an historical and critical theory which questions and passes judgment upon the society in which they think and act.

NOTES

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[2] Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition (Vancouver: Univ. of B.C. Press, 1979), p. 23.

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[34] Arnold, "The True Greatness of Christianity," in Dissent and Dogma, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1968), p. 399.

[35] Arnold, p. 396.

[36] Sir Thomas Browne: The Major Works, ed. C. A. Patrides (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 310.

[37] Browne, p. 312.

[38] Complete Essays, p. 455.

[39] Complete Essays, p. 161.

[40] Complete Essays, p. 429.

[41] Browne, p. 132.

[42] C. A. Patrides, "Introduction" to Sir Thomas Browne, p. 29.

[43] Browne, pp. 95-96.

[44] Johnson, p. 272.

[45] Johnson, p. 50.

[46] Poems, p. 131. Also, in a letter to Pelham Edgar dated 23 February 1905 (see More Letters of D. C. Scott), Scott expresses doubt

in Science's ability to illuminate mysteries as well as Poetry, but admits that his view may be too "visionary."

[47] M. H. Abrams, "The Design of The Prelude," in The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. J. Wordsworth, et al. (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 589. Subsequent references appear in text and are abbreviated Prelude.

[48] W. B. Gallie, "Is The Prelude a Philosophical Poem?" Philosophy, XXII (1947), p. 131.

[49] Tennyson, Poetry, p. 142.

[50] Benziger, p. 33.

[51] Poems, p. 50. Here Scott is revealing the kind of optimism voiced by Wordsworth in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1850). Wordsworth had seen the Poet's work as being complimentary to that of the "Man of Science" in that essay and saw new knowledge as an opportunity for new avenues of artistic expression. See The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), Vol. 1, p. 141.

[52] T. S. Eliot, "The 'Pensées' of Pascal," in Selected Essays (London: Faber, 1951), p. 408.

[53] Thomas Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 44.

[54] Merton, p. 46.

Chapter IV

[1] Flood, "Duplicity," Black Moss, pp. 50-63.

[2] Flood, "Native People in Scott's Short Fiction," in The Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium, ed. K. P. Stitch (Ottawa: Univ. of Ottawa Press, 1979), p. 73.

[3] Brown, "Memoir," p. xxi.

[4] Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," in The Poems of Matthew Arnold, ed. K. Allott (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1965), p. 288.

[5] Fred Cogswell, "No Heavenly Harmony: A Reading of Powassan's Drum," Studies in Canadian Literature, Vol. 1-2 (Summer 1976), p. 235.

[6] PAC, Scott Papers, diary entry 6 July 1905.

[7] Marshall, p. 31.

[8] Marshall, pp. 30-31.

[9] Daniells, Literary History, p. 433.

[10] See Barrie Davies' Introduction to At the Mermaid Inn, p. x. Also, Campbell, MI, pp. 25-26.

[11] Daniells, p. 436.

[12] Elizabeth Waterston, "The Missing Face: Five Short Stories by Duncan Campbell Scott," in Studies in Canadian Literature, Vol. 1-2 (Summer 1976), p. 224.

[13] Waterston, p. 225. Also, Scott's favorable review of Tess of the D'Urbervilles (MI, 2 April 1892) suggests that he may have been influenced by the outlook of Thomas Hardy.

[14] Hugh Dempsey, Charcoal's World (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978).

[15] Giose Rimanelli and Roberto Ruberto, eds., Modern Canadian Short Stories (Toronto: Ryerson, 1966), p. xvii.

[16] Desmond Pacey, A Book of Canadian Stories (Toronto: Ryerson, 1947), p. xx.

[17] Glenn Clever, "Duncan Campbell Scott's Fiction: Moral Realism and Canadian Identity," in the Scott Symposium, p. 88.

[18] Scott, Pierre in Canadian Plays from Hart House Theatre, ed. Vincent Massey (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926), Vol. 1, p. 69.

[19] Pierre, p. 70.

[20] Ringuet, Thirty Acres, trans. Felix and Dorothea Walter (Toronto: Macmillan, 1940).

[21] Pierre, p. 66.

[22] Arnold, Poems, p. 172.

[23] Scott, "The Desjardins," in In the Village of Viger and Other Stories, ed. S. Dragland (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. 27. Subsequent references appear in the text and are indicated by the abbreviation Viger.

[24] Flood, in the Scott Symposium, p. 78.

[25] Clever, in the Scott Symposium, pp. 94-95.

[26] Clever, p. 89.

[27] Clever, p. 93.

Chapter V

[1] Stephen Melville, "Psychoanalysis Demands a Mind," in *Aesthetics Today*, ed. Morris Philipson and Paul J. Gudel (New York: Meridian, 1980), p. 445.

[2] I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1929), p. 259.

[3] Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1976), p. 255.

[4] J. Hillis Miller, "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure," *The Georgia Review*, Vol. XXX (1976), p. 24.

[5] Scott to E. K. Brown, 24 July 1947, in *More Letters of Duncan Campbell Scott*, p. 82.

[6] "Circles," in *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside, 1957), p. 168.

[7] *Emerson*, p. 170.

[8] Fred Cogswell, "Symbol and Decoration: The Piper of Arll," in the *Scott Symposium*, p. 48.

[9] Cogswell, p. 53.

[10] "The Return" is a story version of the play *Pierre*, and is more fully realized in its characterization and plot detail.

[11] See Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1979), Chapter Three in particular.

[12] Kathy Mezei, "From Lifeless Pools to the Circle of Affection: The Significance of Space in the Poetry of D. C. Scott," in the *Scott Symposium*, p. 25.

[13] Mezei, p. 26.

[14] "From the Farm on the Hill," *The Magic House and Other Poems* (1893), p. 13.

[15] John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in Poetical Works, ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford: Univ. Press, 1970), p. 209.

[16] Arnold, Poems, p. 243.

[17] Scott to E. K. Brown, 10 January 1946, in More Letters, p. 74.

[18] Glenn Clever, Introduction to Selected Stories, p. ix.

[19] Torquanto Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, trans. and intro. Joseph Tusiani (Cranbury, N.J.: Assoc. Univ. Press, 1970). See especially Canto XII, stanzas 115 to end, and Canto VIII, stanzas 52-55, for descriptions of a storm and the discovery of a headless corpse.

[20] See Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and The Lament of Tasso in The Poetical Works of Lord Byron (London: Oxford, 1945).

[21] Tusiani, pp. 11-23.

[22] For an interesting comparison of the uses of dream as metaphor by Scott and Archibald Lampman, the reader can consult two studies in particular. R. Harrison, in "So Deathly Silent: The Resolution of Pain and Fear in the Poetry of Lampman and D. C. Scott," The Lampman Symposium, ed. Lorraine McMullen (Ottawa: Univer. of Ottawa, 1976), p. 67, says that for Lampman the dream is "the ultimate relief for the pain suffered by the soul" in the world of immediate reality. Similarly, Sandra Djwa says, in "Lampman's Fleeting Vision," Canadian Literature, 56 (Spring 1973), p. 22, that Lampman struggled with a conception of the dream-state in poems where "the reader is always made aware of the unpleasant 'real' which the idyllic vision attempts to subjugate. . . ."

[23] Dates given for individual poems are those when poems were actually written, according to information found in R. L. McDougall's "D. C. Scott: The Dating of the Poems," Canadian Poetry, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 1978), pp. 13-27. This is to draw attention to the fact that the chronology of the writing of these poems is not reflected by the order of their appearance in The Green Cloister, because that order indicates the desired intellectual acceptance Scott wishes to illuminate.

[24] The Apology, Phaedo and Crito of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Collier, 1937), p. 73.

[25] Quentin Anderson, The Imperial Self (New York: Knopf, 1971), p. viii.

[26] Anderson, p. 176.

Conclusion

[1] Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. George Watson (London: Dent, 1975), pp. 173-74.

[2] Frye's remarks with regard to Scott are consistent with other statements he has made concerning literature generally. In the essay "The Keys to Dreamland," in The Educated Imagination (Toronto: CBC, 1963), p. 38, Frye says ". . . so much of a writer's best writing is or seems to be involuntary. It's involuntary because the forms of literature itself are taking control of it, and these forms are what are embodied in the conventions of literature."

[3] Michael Ondaatje, "The gate in his head," in Rat Jelly (Toronto: Coach House, 1973), p. 62.

[4] Scott Symposium, p. 20.

[5] Scott Symposium, p. 17.

[6] Bloom, Poetry and Repression, p. 25.

[7] Bloom, A Map of Misreading (New York: Oxford, 1975), p. 3.

[8] Bloom, Poetry and Repression, p. 62.

[9] Scott Symposium, p. 20.

[10] Bloom, Map, p. 13.

[11] Bloom, Map, p. 19.

[12] The Erminskin band, for example, has a profitable program of investments in areas such as the construction industry and film-making.

[13] R. L. McDougall, "The Dodo and the Cruising Auk: Class in Canadian Literature," in Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 229-30.

[14] Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 376.

[15] Frank Lentricchia, After the New Criticism (Chicago: Univer. of Chicago, 1980), p. xiii.

[16] Frye, The Educated Imagination, p. 39.

[17] Serge Doubrovsky, The New Criticism in France, trans. Derek Coltman (Chicago: Univer. of Chicago, 1973), p. 29. Doubrovsky is being quoted in the Introduction by Edward Waskolek.

[18] Anderson, The Imperial Self, p. 238.

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